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ARTISTIC JAPAN.

ARTISTIC JAPAN:

Illustrations and Essays.

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THE POETIC TRADITION IN JAPANESE ART.

I.

We have already said in these pages that, in order to understand the art of a foreign country, we must familiarise ourselves with the land, its flora, its fauna, its manners, customs, and its history. But it is above all necessary to discern in the manifestation of its art the sensations of which it is the expression, the natural tendencies to which it bears witness. In a word, we must penetrate the spirit of a people, almost trace the beatings of its heart.

With the Japanese, their poetry, the old poems above all, clearly show this side of the national mind. These poems alone suffice to show us the profoundness of the popular sentiment, its need of the ideal, its joy in vibrating to every contact with the beautiful. The treasures of ancient poetry

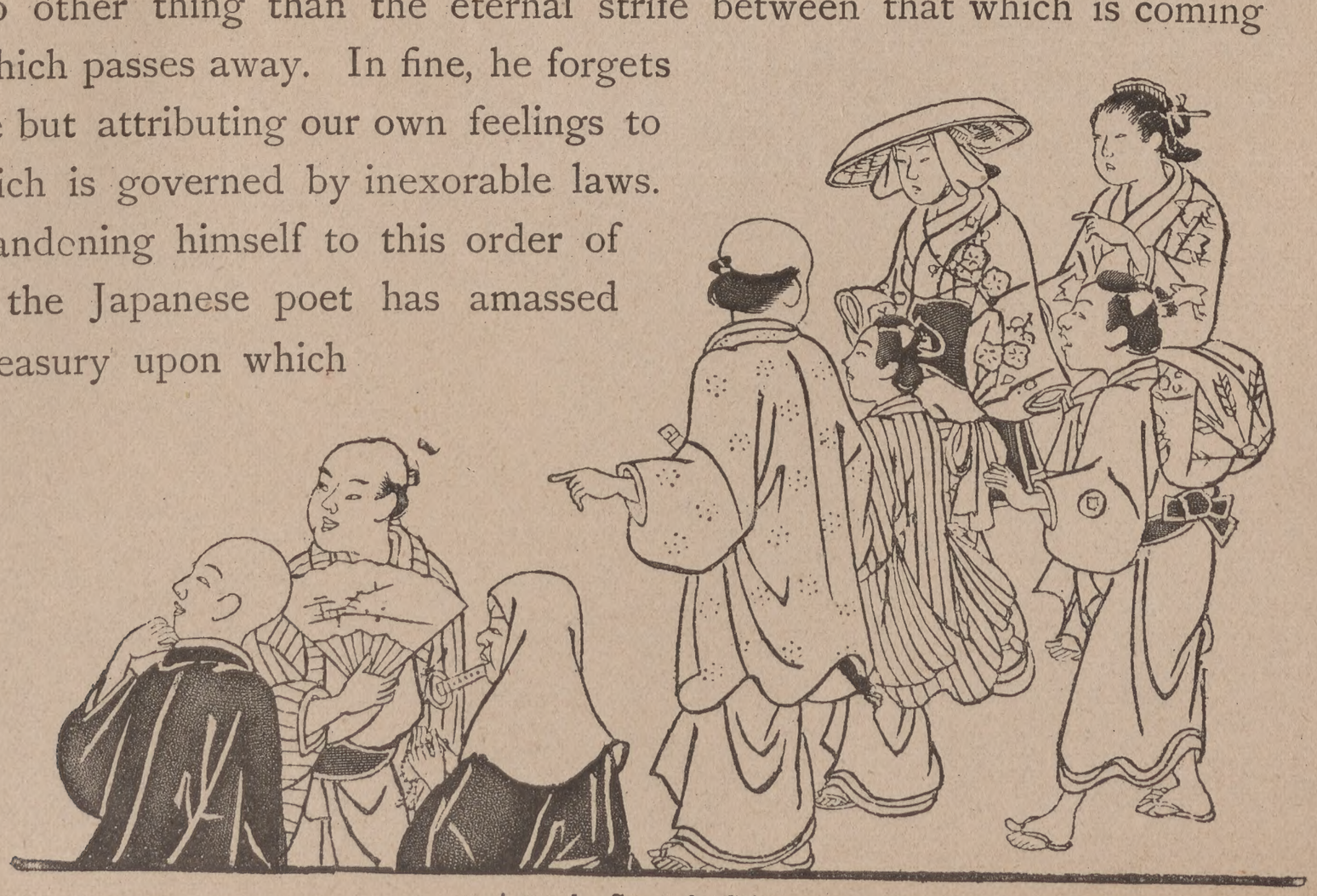
have inspired the Japanese artist in the most genial of his works; it alone has guided the hand of the ablest artisans by furnishing them with an exhaustless mine of subjects for ornamentation.

What are the origins of this precious heirloom, how and under what forms has it been reinforced, how transmitted from age to age so as to reach intact to modern times? This I shall endeavour to show in a few lines towards the close of these pages. The main thing is to comprehend the meaning of the work of ages, so homogeneous that it has borne a whole people towards identical aspirations.

The cycle of the seasons, above all, fills the poet of old classic times with enthusiasm. Under the concise form of lyrical aphorisms, he not only unrolls before us the ever-changing aspects which every new season imprints on the landscape of his beautiful country, according as the plants and flowers burst into life or perish; not only are his emotions stirred by the reflected agency of those transformations in the life of animals, but he has the art to delineate in their most delicate shades the sensations which these sights awaken in the hearts of men.

Can we, then, wonder that more than one strophe, it may be a thousand years old, in which some poet of the imperial court overflows with adoration of surrounding nature, comes to our ears as the familiar expression of a quite modern order of sentiments, which we might indeed consider the property of our own race? But the poetic transports of the Japanese express something more than the mere physical enjoyment caused by the harmony of the outlines of a landscape or the splendour of its colours. With a complete forgetfulness of his own temperament, he suffers himself to be penetrated to the depths of his soul by the sad or the joyful note of the ambient air, ignoring, in his exaltation, that in the phenomena by which we—the spectators—are affected sentimentality holds no place. He thinks not that at the bottom of all this there is no other thing than the eternal strife between that which is coming and that which passes away. In fine, he forgets that we are but attributing our own feelings to nature, which is governed by inexorable laws.

In abandoning himself to this order of sensations the Japanese poet has amassed the rich treasury upon which



A popular Group, by Sukénobu.

succeeding painters, and after them the artisans, have drawn. The connection between these ancient poems and modern Japanese craft is so close that their subjects live again in all artistic production. They are found in the designs for decoration; they are to be read on the boxes of lacquer; the workers in metal use them for adorning the accessories of sabres; the ceramic artist wreathes them about his porcelain, and the weaver of fabrics makes them speak in all his works. These ancient poems have become, as it were, the common patrimony of the artist and of the public—the first drawing his inspiration from them, sure to be comprehended by those who saw his work.

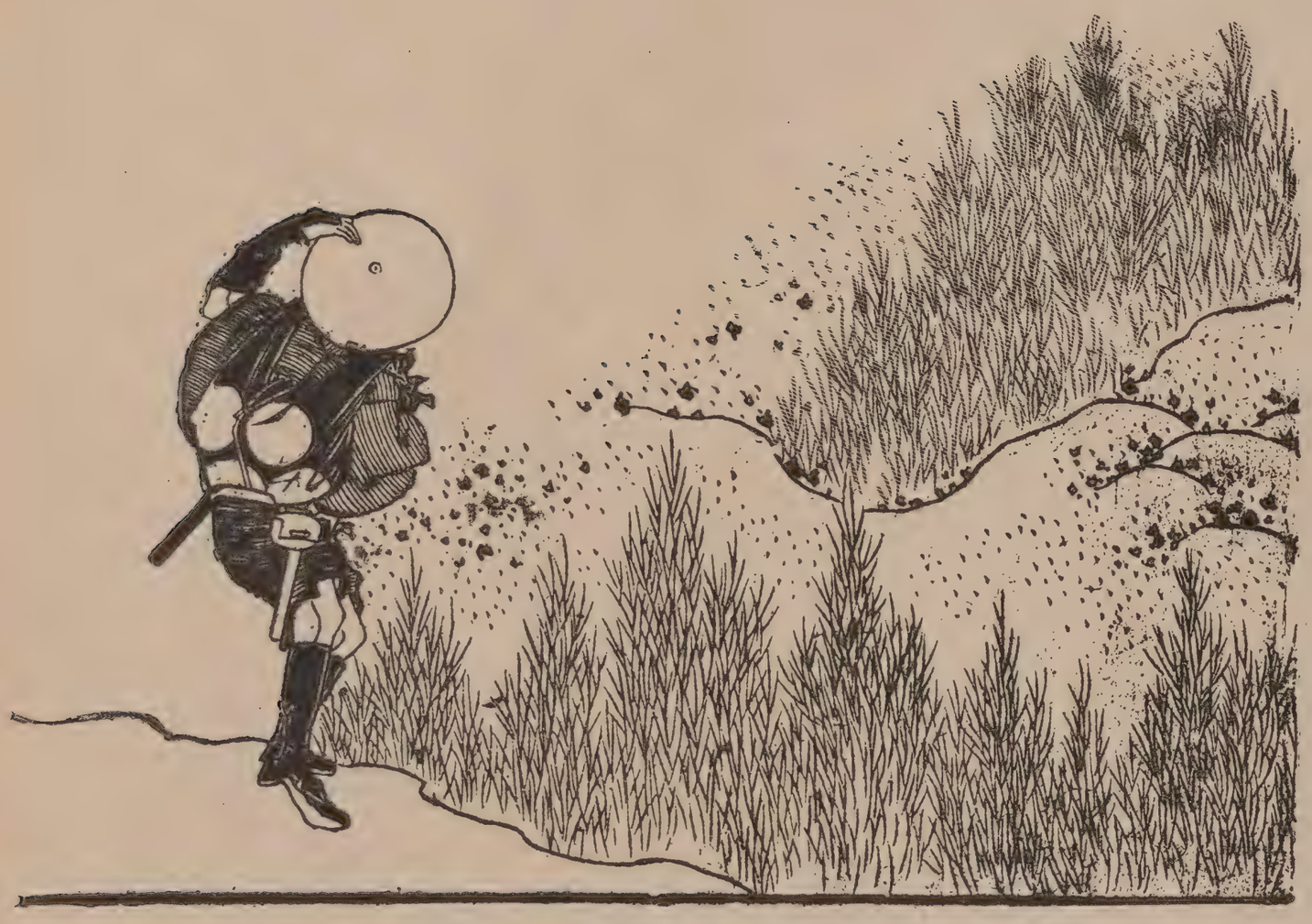
Young Woman gathering Chrysanthemums, by Shunsai.

Snow still covers the mountain and the plain. Already under this covering the poet shows us the pink buds of the *moumé* (plum-tree) which the Japanese nightingale, under the yet snow-laden foliage, greets with his song as the first harbingers of spring.* Thick white excrescences load the

* Spring, spring, has come, while yet the landscape bears
Its fleecy burden of unmelted snow!
Now may the zephyr gently 'gin to blow,
To melt the nightingale's sweet frozen tears!
Amid the branches of the silv'ry bowers
The nightingale doth sing; perchance he knows
That spring hath come, and takes the later snows
For the white petals of the plum's sweet flowers.

No man so callous but he heaves a sigh
When o'er his head the wither'd cherry-flowers
Come flutt'ring down—who knows?—the spring's soft show'rs
May be but tears shed by the sorrowing sky.[1]

[1] These lines are a free translation of Japanese *outa* (stanzas), by Basil Hall Chamberlain.



Traveller in the Mountains, by Hokusai.

knotty pines which cling to the face of the rocks, and already the poet culls for his beloved the first shoots of spring vegetation. Flakes of snow still fall and gently alight on the dark material of his robe. He sings the constancy of the evergreen pines, symbols of hardy old age; but he also rejoices to see that even this verdure each season takes fresher and more tender tones. He observes the beneficent effects of the rain of spring which makes to burst the coverings of the flower-buds, and which bends yet more the branches of the weeping-willow. Then he celebrates the blossom of the cherry, whose splendours adorn the mountain slopes between the shifting and nebulous bands of mist, themselves like white clouds of flowers. The poet compares the fall of the petals to a fresh fall of snow, jealous of the wind which is free to caress the flowers which blow on the heights of the mountain, inaccessible to him.

But through all these transports, he already sadly meditates on the evanescence of all the beauties which have charmed him. In the song of the nightingale he no longer recognises a welcome to awakened nature, but rather a lament over its vanished splendours; he contemplates with sadness the nightingale, which, by a touch of its wing, brings down the withered petals; and he asks himself if the rain which flows in torrents at the moment is not a flood of tears which is shed over the passing away of the flowers. Far into the summer the nightingale yet sings. When it is silent the poet consoles himself by lending an ear to the *hototo-guisu* (night-cuckoo), sad and piercing in the heat of a night fragrant with orange-blossoms, under the clear pale light of a crescent moon.*

* In blossoms the wisteria-tree to-day
Breaks forth that sweep the wavelets of my lake.
When will the mountain-cuckoo come and make
The garden vocal with his first sweet lay?[1]

[1] Translated by B. H. Chamberlain.

Instead of the cherry-blossoms, the poet now admires the long white, blue, or violet branches of the glycin and the *kerria*, with their flowers like buds of gold. But under the fertilising action of the warm rains which in summer turn the whole of Japan into a veritable hot-house, the scene is quickly changed. The poet has scarcely time to sing the magnificence of the lotus, which suspends the purity of its flowers over the muddy waters, comparable, according to Buddhistic ideas, to a human soul, purified from terrestrial passion, soaring towards the divine light.*

Already the fields are yellow with waving rice, whose young shoots seemed to him but planted yesterday, and he bethinks him of the rapid flight of the seasons. Now, against the sombre ground of the sky, flights of wild geese are passing with loud cries. In the morning the poet admires the dew-drops, of which the night air has made pearls for the spiders'-webs, which are stretched from bough to bough in the fields and open parts of the woods.† The forest glows with colour, and the maple woods, clothed in striking colours, seem to the poet's charmèd eye a continuation, as it were, of the blossoming cherry of the spring. He was stirred by the petals which whilom floated on the windings of the streams; to-day it is the shower of maple-leaves which the autumn wind scatters to the torrents.‡ It is the hour

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* O, lotus leaf! I dreamt that the wide earth
Held naught more pure than thee—held naught more true.
Why, then, when on thee rolls a drop of dew,
Pretend that 'tis a gem of priceless worth?

Can I be dreaming? 'Twas but yesterday
We planted out each tender shoot again;
And now the autumn breeze sighs o'er the plain,
Where fields of yellow rice confess its sway.

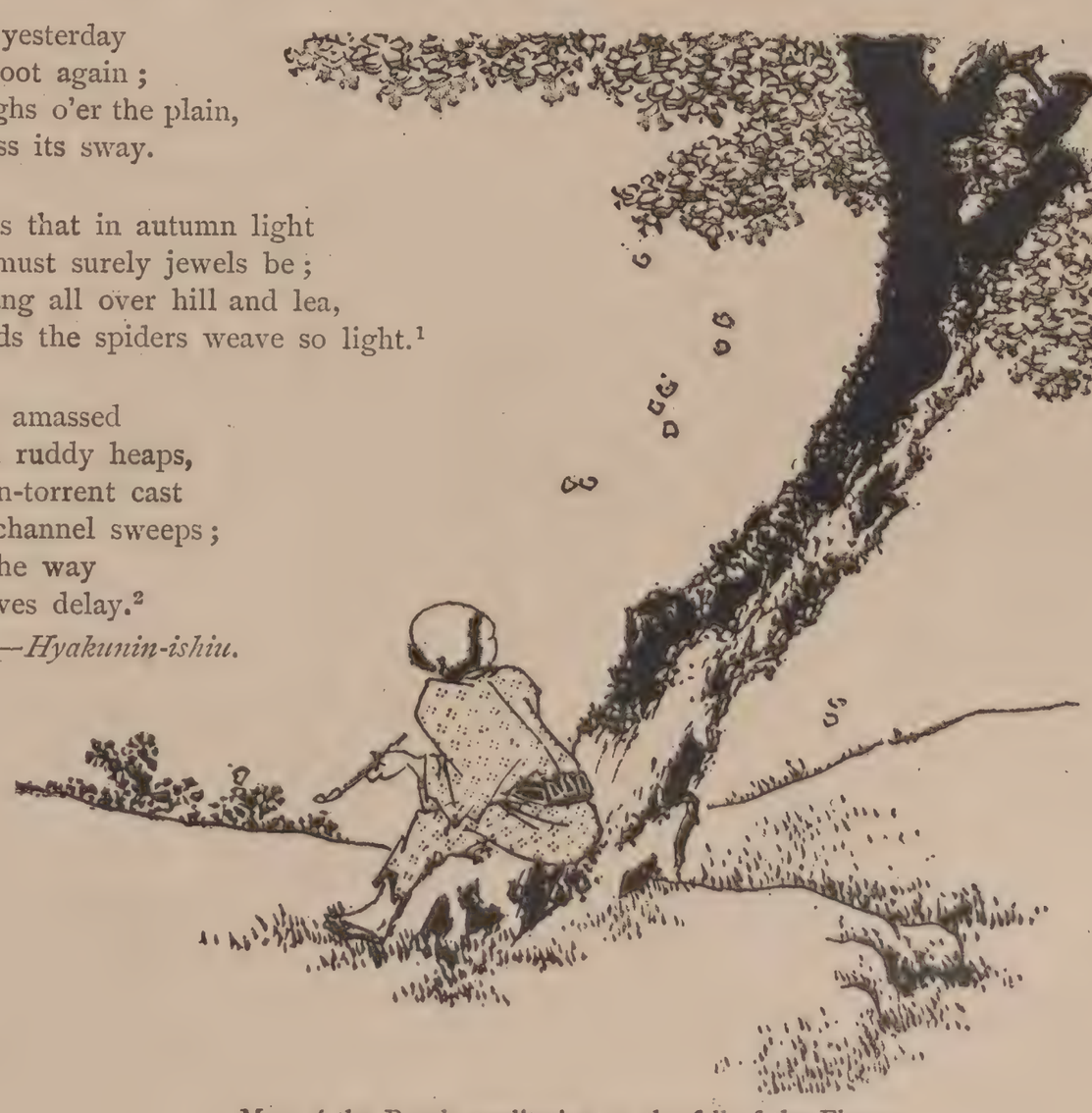
† The silv'ry dewdrops that in autumn light
Upon the moors must surely jewels be;
For there they hang all over hill and lea,
Strung on the threads the spiders weave so light.[1]

‡ The winds of autumn have amassed
Dried withered leaves in ruddy heaps,
Have them in th' mountain-torrent cast
Whose stream in stony channel sweeps;
Amid the rocks that bar the way
The mouisji's reddened leaves delay.[2]

—*Hyakunin-ishiu.*

[1] Translated by B. H. Chamberlain.

[2] These lines are a free translation of Japanese *outa* (stanzas) by F. V. Dickins.



Man of the People meditating on the fall of the Flowers.

at which the shika-stag calls to the doe.*

After the downpours of summer, in the brightened atmosphere, shines the full moon, the third in the trinity of friends of the Japanese poet, *i.e.*, the snow, the moon, and the cherry-blossom. At length, when all is clouded, when once again the snow is whirled about, the poet seeks for a consoling thought in the surrounding sadness—these white flakes, are they not the harbingers of flowers, denizens of some celestial land beyond the clouds where reigns perennial spring?

In these poetic pictures, inspired by the cycle of the seasons, who does not recognise hundreds of subjects represented on the guards of sabres, on boxes of lacquer, on works in porcelain? And yet the close relation which we observe between the two expressions of art, poetry and drawing, is not ascribable to a common cause. The poet and the artist have each been swayed by a different influence. The poet sought his inspiration from immediate contact with nature; while the artist owed his subjects to the songs of the poet. The result has been that these subjects, however varied they may be, are more limited than they would have been if the decorator had gone to nature direct. If the treasure accumulated through long ages in poems venerated as classics has offered a mine less rich than that of nature directly consulted, the artist has had on the other hand the immense advantage that the subject represented was one known to all—nay, more, that he caused again to live in the minds of contemporaries

In the Rain, by Hokusai.

* Now 'mid the hills the mouisji
Is trampled down 'neath hoof of deer,
Whose plaintive cries continually
Are heard both far and near.
My shivering frame
Now autumn's piercing chills doth blame.[1]

—*Hyakunin-ishiu.*

[1] Translated by F. V. Dickins.

famous verses of ancient times. And the end is largely attained. From the outset, all that the artist created was intimately bound up with the poetic reminiscences of cultivated people. The poems were known to every one—there never was any need, in order to get at the meaning of the subject represented, of the painstaking which in our case is necessary in order to comprehend them. But, by dint of travelling thus ceaselessly in one circle, a certain monotony might be expected to manifest itself. But at a given moment there had arisen a new school which gave expression to its own sensations, known by the name of *Ukioye*, of which the great Hokusai was the "bright particular star." It has the merit, perhaps to this day inadequately appreciated, of having broken down the ancient barriers; it extended the area which predecessors had worked throughout ages, and gave itself a larger liberty of procedure. But, in the midst of all this emancipation, we shall still find the undeniable influence of ancient poetic tradition.

J. BRINCKMANN.

(*To be concluded in the next number.*)

Summer Landscape, by Hokusai.

DESCRIPTION OF PLATES.

Plate BJJ is a fresh specimen of those portraits of actors of which we gave an example in the preceding part (Plate ABJ) by Katsugawa Shunsho.

If the Katsugawa have been the most prolific illustrators of the theatre, they have not been the only ones. The print which we now reproduce is by Toyokuni, who has signed a long series of portraits of actors, groups, and theatrical scenes under aspects the most diverse. No one has more distinctively impressed his personality on this class of subjects; they are full of power and life. The scene here depicted is an individual preparing for a cock-fight in the imperial palace.

Plate AIC reproduces one of those numerous anonymous studies which we have already drawn upon for an example. Here we see again the innate love of the Japanese for the first flowers of spring and for the light of the moon which is pointed to by Mr. Brinckmann in the present part. It is the agitated branch of the plum-tree (*moumé*), with scarce-opening buds, which has charmed the artist in silhouetting it on a clear night in the presence of the star dear to the poet. With that bold stroke of the brush which we have already observed upon, the author of this rapid sketch has traced the sweeping droop of the branch on a ground of blue, on which stands out the disc of the moon.

Plate AAF is yet another anonymous page which represents, almost natural size, a wading bird similar to the grebe which is seen walking on the clear gravel shallows of our European rivers. With two tints the bird is adroitly given with its spotted plumage, moving amid the herbage which grows on the border of the marshes. When the Japanese revive, with like accuracy and sentiment, the myriads of living things which swarm about them, whether in the air, on land, or in the water, when they present all the details of external form in animals as they indicate their dispositions, may we not without exaggeration say that the gifts of an artist are doubled by the scientific attributes of a naturalist?

Plate AIJ reproduces a study of fish by Hiroshigé, a painter who has already (Part XVII., Plate AJB) given us a similar page. The series of these fish consists of thirty plates in two different forms; almost all of them have this peculiarity, that the fish have not been observed in the water and yet they have not the aspect of fish that are dead. It is probable that Hiroshighé made these studies in walking by the markets of the city.

Plate AHA is derived from an album of Ittsho to which we already owe Plate AHG of our last part. In the technicalities of his art, Ittsho followed the old Indian ink-drawings executed by summary touches, the shape being obtained by the simple means of reserves of white. But he shows himself an innovator in that he enlivens his subject by dashes of fun, which throw about his work, as it were, flashes of joyous light.

The child, which is here seen tending a cow, takes advantage of the animal's repose to tie the cord to the trunk of a weeping-willow; he clambers up the tree and gives himself over to his own meditations. It would be impossible with less effort to picture this attitude of familiar and boyish nonchalance, or on the other hand the masterly stillness of the animal seen in fore-shortening. Its back, illuminated by the reserves, marks a powerful originality in observation and technical skill.

Plate BAG is a plate extracted from the album of Shumboku, from which we have already taken Plate AHB of Part XVII. We know that in the eighteenth century Shumboku reproduced by means of engraving the most popular old Chinese and Japanese paintings.

The cock and the hen represented in this plate are rendered by the simple juxtaposition of short touches of the brush whose different directions clearly show forth the breast and rich plumage of the neck, while the long feathers of the tail are traced with a juicy brush at one stroke. Not less the proud head of the cock and the more modest carriage of the hen have a firmness and a life which manifest the simple and sturdy hand of an author of primitive times—a striking demonstration that in the extreme East the word primitive implies nothing that is hieratic.

Plate AGI reproduces a fragment of a girdle in figured silk of the seventeenth century.

In the patterns of their girdles, beyond any other article of dress, the Japanese gave rein to their inventive fancy. There is not a topic, ornamental, poetic, or other, which these masters, with their unappeasable thirst for novelty, have not used for the adornment of their *obi*. The utter absurdity of a subject is not a reason for its exclusion. About ten years ago we saw in Japan a young girl whose girdle owed its ornament to the explosion of a lighted petroleum lamp, which had strewed all parts of the fabric with rents and fragments.

The three objects represented in Plate BAD are not umbrella-handles, as might be supposed by some of our ladies who have used them for this purpose; but they are pipe-cases—a very familiar article of use in Japan, on which the national art has been exercised with the greatest fancy.

For these the Japanese have employed every imaginable kind of material—wood, bamboo, bone, ivory, shell, bronze, lacquer; assemblages and encrustations of these different substances—all have been made to serve in the manufacture of these little articles, of which every one, down to the humblest person, possesses at least one specimen. The artisan took advantage of the inequalities of the wood, the different tones of the ivory and the bone, of gradations of tint, in fine, of the smallest opportunities presented by the first material which came to hand.

The first of these pipe-cases on the left hand is in wood. The designer has compelled a knot in the stem which he had chosen, to aid in the decoration. On it he has worked the short branches of a magnolia in flower. The tube in the middle is a piece of bamboo on which is made to defile a long cortege of mendicant priests, carved in bas-relief on a tawny ground. In this procession there is evidently an *arrière-pensée* of caricature. Nothing pleases the Japanese populace better than the spectacle of a subject grave in itself presented under a ridiculous aspect. With an object of common use like this, merriment is renewed a hundred times a day—every time that the smoker takes out his pipe from the case or replaces it. The third pipe-case is made of the bone of a fish about which is adroitly twisted a magnolia like that which we find on the first. Part of the branch, separated from the rest by hollowing out the bone, forms the requisite handle for carrying the object. Natural gradations of colour in the bone lend a charm to the original which our illustration cannot reproduce.

Plate BJF offers a subject for decoration in which are seen cranes flying above foaming waters.

Plate ACI magnifies the flower of the plum for a decoration in which they play an important part as single flowers in irregular halves.

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AAF. **Study of a Wading Bird.**

AGI. **Fragment of Material of the Seventeenth Century.**

AHA. **Child and Cow.** By Ittsho.

AIJ. **Fish.** By Hiroshigé.

BAD. **Three Pipe-cases.**

BJF. **Industrial Model.** Storks Flying over Water.

BAG. **Cock and Hen.** By Shumboku.

AIC. **Branch of Plum-tree in Flower.**

ACI. **Industrial Model.** Cherry Blossom.

No. XX. will contain the conclusion of Mr. J. Brinckmann's Essay on "The Poetic Tradition in Japanese Art."

BAD

THE POETIC TRADITION IN JAPANESE ART.

II.

Having, in the company of the poets and the artists, gone the round of the seasons, let us examine a little more nearly the subjects which we frequently meet with in Japanese decoration.

One of the most common subjects which was traced by the pencil of the decorator on the porcelain of Hirado, chiselled in incrustations of silver on the guards of sabres, woven into brocades, and represented on all kinds of gold lacquer, is the blossom of the plum-tree,* sprinkled over an irregularly striped surface which brings to mind the cracks of a thin sheet of ice. One might see in this decoration merely the reproduction of something which the artist had observed in nature—the fall of the flowers of the *moumé* caught by a late frost. But how shall we explain the frequent variation where the flowers are not scattered, but appear to issue from the frozen water? The poet Massazoumi, one of the stars of the literary Court which the Princess Kisai-no-Miya assembled about her in the later years of the ninth century, gives us the key to the subject in this *outa*. "The ice melted by the wind of the valley is broken by the waves, which are like the flowers which spring sends us in advance of the others."

These first flowers, the *hatsu hana* above others, are the blossom of the *moumé*, and the decorative artists, applying the poet's simile—more bold than

* See Plate BCD.

clear—have multiplied a subject whose meaning would escape us but for the *outa* of old Massazoumi. We must bear in mind that Chinese art possesses a subject of similar character; it is the decoration so much prized in England in its application to old blue porcelain, under the name of "hawthorn pattern." We shall soon meet with a still more striking coincidence, arising out of the same poetic idea, in Chinese as well as Japanese art.

Another theme of ornament is still more frequently met with in the flowers of the *sakura*, the cherry-tree of Japan, now floating on a scarcely-waved current of water, now drawn along by the impetuous force of a torrent. They are easily recognised by their heart-shaped petals, the flower of the *moumé* being without indentations.

A brooklet of the imperial garden carrying away the flowers of the *sakura* inspired the poet Sugano-no-Takayo, with this *outa*, preserved by the Kokinshifu: "Scarcely detached from the branch, O flowers of the *sakura*, fugitive and inconstant, you become but passing foam!" And in an *outa* of Tsurayuki, preserved in the same collection: "If we had not the howling wind and the torrent of the valley, we should never see the flowers of the *sakura* which unfold in the concealment of the mountain.

Other poems reveal to us the symbolic meaning which attaches to this image in Japan. The cherry-tree's short season of bloom is compared to the short duration of human life. At the sight of the fall of the petals, the poet is penetrated with a sense of the evanescence and vanity of earthly things. The inclination to melancholy, which, in the Japanese character, mingles so curiously with a spirit which is alive to all sorts of frolic, is kept alive by the contemplation of

The Poet seated on a River's brink.

the fall of a flower. Numberless pieces of poetry go to show this; a few shall suffice us.

Tsurayuki addresses the flowers of the *sakura*, and tells them that they should not bloom if they are to decay so soon, for then his heart would be at peace. And as another poet had said that nothing is so ephemeral as the blossom of the cherry, Tsurayuki answers him: "After all, the blossom of the *sakura* is not so fleeting; the human heart is more changeable still—it needs not the breath of the wind."

Sosei, the priest, expresses a similar thought in one of his *outa*: "Never more will I plant a cherry-tree; changing is its spring array—and not less changeable is the heart of man." Other poets, all anterior to the thirteenth century, give us infinite variations of the same idea—"Every year the splendour of the cherry-blossom comes to us again. Will it be given to thee to see it once more? That depends on fate." "Blossom of the cherry, which falls before it is faded, like thee I would timely disappear; for when the flower of age is past, the time of sadness will come." Another reflection of less melancholy cast is expressed in the form of advice: "When the flowers of the *sakura* have disappeared, thy regrets will not bring them back. If thou wouldst gather them, gather them to-day; to-morrow will be too late." Besides, we know that none understand the joyful side of life better than the Japanese—how to cull the flower before its beauty has gone.

If the severe classical poets have not brought this side of the national character into relief, we may cite some lines of more recent origin, which we transcribe from

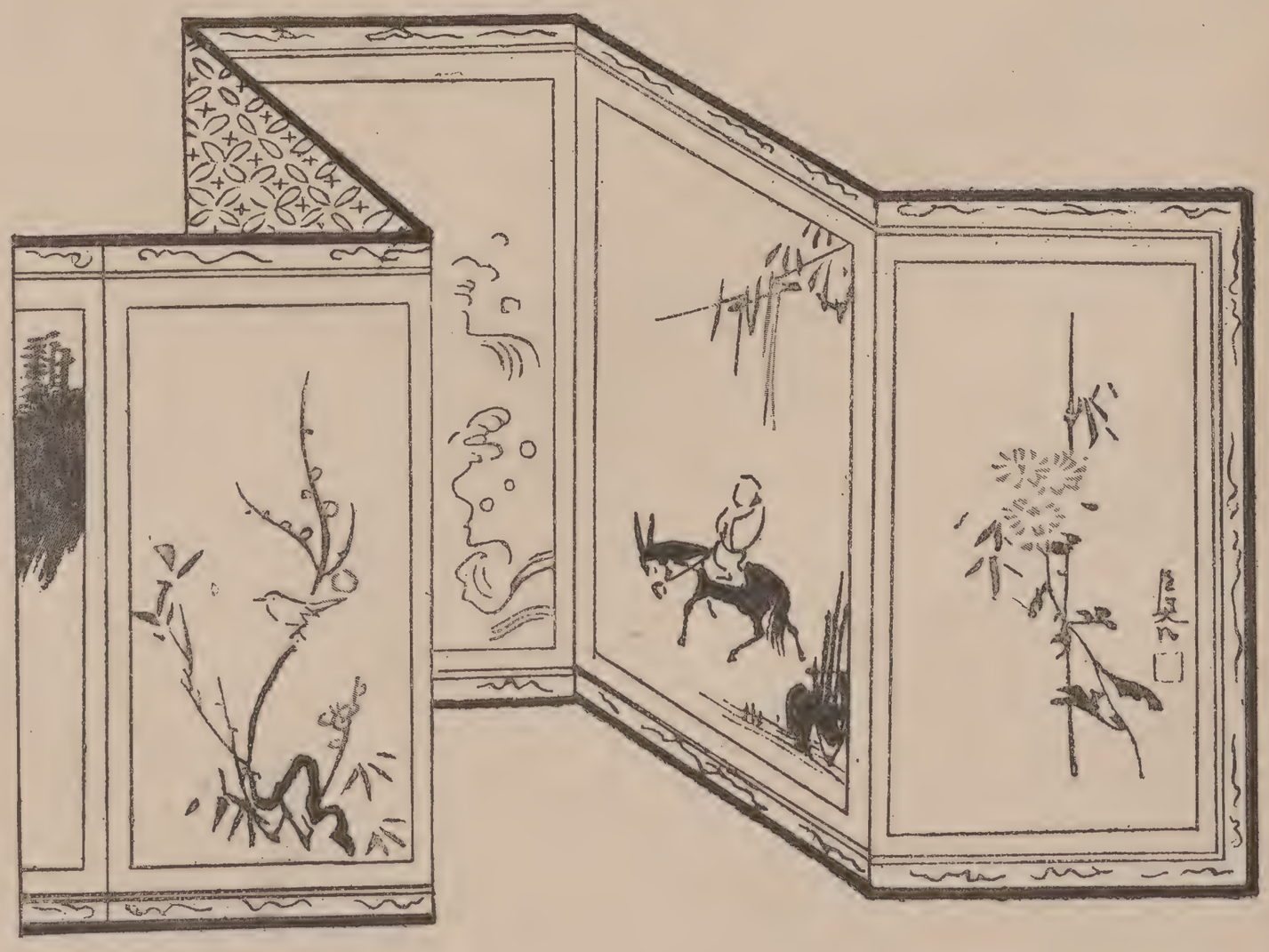
a charming *saké* bottle of Bizen stoneware in the collection of Mr. S. Bing: "In a morning of snow as well as in a morning of flowers, when we possess this object, our happiness is complete." The poet here makes merry allusion to the contents of the bottle, which tends to enhance the beauty of the bottle itself.

A subject almost as frequently met with as the flowers of the cherry is furnished by the leaves of the maple, which are driven down by the mountain torrent. The poet, in ecstacy before the flaming colours of the foliage, recalls us to the frail tenure of human things. It is thus that Chisato, one of the most prolific poets of the end of the ninth century, sings:—

"One thing, alas, is more fleeting than the leaves of the maple which are swept by the autumn wind. Man's passage across the scene of this world can be likened only to dust which is whirled about."

The artist prefers to show us this subject in the red and gold lacquers, which lend themselves marvellously to the rendering of these warm tints.

On the other hand, the poet, in the presence of nature, recalls some representation from the hand of a painter. So long ago as the ninth century, Narihira, a poet of imperial blood, celebrated as much for his clandestine attachment for a beautiful empress and by the banishment which ensued as by his too concise verses, demands: "Even when the gods yet governed the earth by thunder, could there have been a picture comparable to that of the silent river Fatsuta, flowing through the peaceful fields of Yamato, with its waves spotted with drops of blood as on the canvas of an old Chinese painter?"



Here the relation between painting and

poetry comes out strongly into relief. And may we not suppose that this subject is derived from the ancient art of China, which was for Japanese art what Greece has been for our arts? Special studies are unfortunately the more difficult for us—that we know very little (except from the classical collection of Confucius) of the ancient poems of China, and less still of its classic painting, which, for want of accessible documents, will perhaps ever remain for us a closed book.

As this question is before us, we may conclude by giving an example (curious enough) of coincidence between a Japanese poet and a Chinese poet on a subject much affected in Japanese art. We often see, whether in a kakémono or in an album, or on lacquer, or in a *netzuke*, a representation of the *kinota*, that is, of women beating a newly-woven fabric in order to make it supple.

This work goes on in the ninth month, towards the end of autumn, at night, by the beautiful light of the moon, the inspiration of the poets. Now, the cadence of the blows of the *kinota*, when heard by a Japanese who is at a distance from his own country, recalls to him the scenes of his infancy and the ancient customs of the land, so much so that he ends by hearing the *kinota* of his native village. This kind of poetic reminiscence forms the subject of an *outa* of the commencement of the thirteenth century:—

> "Now the winds of autumn sweep the inclines of Miyoshino, and the sound of the *kinota* which the wind bears from afar through the night seems to come to me from my native village."

An analogous sentiment was evoked by the *kinota* five centuries earlier in the breast of a Chinese, Li-Tai-Po, one of the great lyric poets of China. A woman longing for the return of her husband, detained by the war of resistance to the Tartar invasion, cries:—

> "Already the crescent of the moon becomes rounded,

Yedo by Day.

and the winds of autumn softly blow. Listen! there do resound the blows of the *kinota* in every house. Alas, my heart is not here, but is at Kansuh, hoping the defeat of the Tartars that my husband may return from the wars."

J. BRINCKMANN.

NOTE.

After having sought for the origin of a certain number of subjects of Japanese decoration, it may be useful to give some notes on the literary history of these sources.

The early history of the lyric poetry of the ancient Japanese reaches back to an epoch which is almost mythical, and, as far as we can trace, a great proportion of the poems which have been venerated as classics existed already before the time when the ancient and powerful literature of the Chinese came with the Buddhist religion to conquer Japan and to impose upon it the characters in which were written the classical books of Confucius.

It is very striking in any case that the prosody of the Japanese poets has not in any way been influenced by that of ancient China, which is of so elevated a nature, and that it should have retained forms of the greatest imaginable simplicity, innocent of all law as to accents, of the length or the shortness of syllables, of alliteration at the head of verses, of rhyme, reposing altogether on the regular recurrence of lines formed of a determinate number of syllables.

The meaning of the lyric poems, such as they have been preserved to us by the collections, of which the oldest dates back as far as the eighth century, has not changed any more than the form of them; it has preserved an essentially Japanese flavour of the soil, which has nothing in common, or very little, with the classic poems of China, such as those of the *Shiking* of Confucius.

The most ancient collection of Japanese lyric poetry, the *Man-yo-siou* or

Yedo by Night.

Man-yo-fushifou (*Collection of the Ten Thousand Leaves*), is considered to have been the compilation of two princes in the reign of the Emperor Shiomoun, who died in the year 756 of the Christian era. These poems are for the most part derived from still more ancient works; but we cannot indicate by what manuscripts they were preserved until that time.

One thing is certain, that the *Collection of the Ten Thousand Leaves* is never quoted but as a complete and finished anthology. The language of these poems is the old Yamato, written in Chinese characters; but they have lost their early signification, and only render the sounds of the Yamato language. The contents offer a great multiplicity of forms, and are not restricted in any way to the short poems called *outa*, whose thirty-one syllables are a succession of verses of five, seven, five, seven, and seven feet, we find also longer poems composed of an uninterrupted alternation of lines of five and seven syllables.

If we might compare the *outa* to a sort of lyric epigram, the longer poems would be analogous to our ballads and elegies.

The difficulty of ascertaining the meaning of the old language of the *Man-yo-siou* has prevented this book from becoming popular to the same extent as the later collections, although the contents of these are derived from the *Ten Thousand Leaves*. Moreover, the necessity for providing the old poems with explanations which would end in giving the *Ten Thousand Leaves* the dimensions of a veritable library has been another obstacle to their free circulation. It must not be supposed, however, that the *Man-yo-siou* has transmitted to learned men alone the poetic sentiments of their ancestors. A great part of its contents has, through other channels, become the patrimony of the people.

Among the anthologies collected in later ages, that known by the name of the *Collection of the Twenty-one Reigns*, the first in point of date and the most fertile source of subjects is the *Kokin-shi-fou* or *Kokin-wa-*

kashu—that is, the *Collection of Old and New Japanese Songs.* It was put together by order of the Emperor Daigo in 905, by the poet Tsurayuki and three collaborators. This anthology contains in twenty volumes a thousand poems, of which almost none exceed the dimensions of the *outa* of thirty-one syllables. They are grouped according to the nature of them. They hail the advent of every new season, or they consist of adieux, love-songs, travel, &c.

Tsurayuki himself wrote the preface to this anthology, in which for the first time was employed, in purely Japanese fashion, the phonetic writing *hirakana*, derived from the Chinese mode of writing. He sets before us in the following terms his simple apprehension of the essence of poetry:—

"When we give expression to the sensations evoked in us by external perception, poetry is the result. The nightingale which sings on the bough, the frog which croaks by the pond, express each their sentiments—and that may be counted as poetry. Thus there is not a living thing which may not be a poet."

A third anthology which has become of capital importance to industrial art is the collection known as *Hyaku-nin-ishiu*, that is, *Outa of the Hundred Poets.* It was made by the poet Teka in the first half of the thirteenth century. These hundred *outa* have been derived from widely different sources, some of them dating back as far as the ninth century. The *Outa of the Hundred Poets* is the most popular book of Japanese poetry. According to the book *Kesi-boukoro*, which fixes the ceremonial of the marriage of the artizan, the farmer, and the tradesman, a copy of the *Hyaku-nin-ishiu* is a compulsory part of the bride's *trousseau.* Its contents are learnt at school; it is diffused all over the country from the cottage to the palace, editions of it have been furnished with learned commentaries. There are editions with plain and coloured plates, also editions on detached cards which are used for a game much in favour with literary people. The *Outa of the Hundred Poets* are known by heart. They are recalled to memory each time that in nature, in the work of an artist, or in a simple article of domestic use, a subject is met with that once stirred the soul of one of these hundred poets, and inspired him to write an *outa.*

J. B.

DESCRIPTION OF PLATES.

Plate AGA is a reproduction of an original kakémono by Gueami (sixteenth century). The style of it recalls one which we published in No. XIV. This latter was from the pencil of Motonobu, the most celebrated painter of the school of Kano (see No. XIV., page 177). The painting we now reproduce belongs to a school parallel to that of the Kanos, by which we mean that both are traceable to Chinese art. But, when the two pages are compared, this one is found to be characterised by a softness which with Motonobu is replaced by an almost savage energy in the use of the brush. The Japanese are excessively fond of the sentiment revealed by such suggestive landscapes. If a comparison may be allowed between our contemporary artists and those who are three ages removed from them, it might be said that this bank of a pond, these village roofs hidden in the foliage, and these mountains bathed in mist recall the temperament and the manner of Corot, while we seem to find in the work of old Motonobu the robust character of Rousseau.

We may add that Gueami worked at the Court of Yoshimasa, the deposed Shogoun who, after his disgrace, was still surrounded by a veritable court of artists and men of letters (see No. XIV., page 172). Gueami was the chief of a miniature artistic dynasty, which retained the name *ami* with differing prefixes. His son Noami and his grandson formed part of it.

Plate BBF reproduces two pages of an album of Shumboku, who, in the eighteenth century, composed numerous works in the manner of the ancient Chinese painters (see No. XIX., Plate BAG). The heron and the sparrow given in this engraving exhibit the same qualities of fidelity in rendering the touch of the Chinese pencil, accustomed to the sole and masterly use of Indian ink.

Plate BCJ is an assemblage of slight sketches of Hiroshigé. We do not see how we can add anything to what has been said of this artist in the study devoted to him by Mr. Anderson in Nos. XV. and XVI. We find in these unimportant sketches, and especially in these diminutive landscapes, hit off with one or two strokes of the pencil, the emotions awakened in the Japanese mind by the indented coasts of their country, by the poetry of the bays and lakes, where creep the covering mists dominated by the majestic and eternal Fouji.

The figures in the upper part of Plate BBI are also from the hand of Hiroshigé. It is a corner of a street covered with frost. All those who are obliged to go out have protected themselves as well as they can against the cold. Here is a man on horseback who is bringing

bundles of wood; another is coming back from market with the fish he has been buying; a child, followed by two dogs, is carrying *saké;* another has loaded various articles on two trays, which are slung to a piece of bamboo on his shoulders; lastly, two porters are conducting *en kago,* a traveller entirely buried in his wraps. We shall find in these modest sketches, clever manipulation combined with all the curious extravagance which we already pointed out as belonging to Hiroshigé (see No. XV.).

The two little toilet scenes on the lower part of this page are from Keisai Yeisen, who must not be confounded with Keisai Kitao of whose work we have already given examples, besides a study of flowers in the present No. Keisai Kitai Massayoshi lived at the end of the last century and the beginning of this, whilst Keisai Yeisen was a contemporary of Hiroshigé and Hokusai, and flourished but some sixteen years since. A great popular artist, Keisai Yeisen, has the gift of observation in minor things, truth and spirituality in catching attitudes on the spot, but a less nervous and slightly effeminate touch.

There is little need to explain the subject of these two sketches, the one of women at their toilet combing their hair and painting their lips, the other of a barber attending to a customer.

This artist plays a very eminent part in Japan, where the complicated nature of the head-dresses renders his assistance indispensable. It is not, however, every day that the laborious elaboration of this edifice is undertaken. In order to preserve it from disarrangement and to procure sleep, a block of wood, called *makoura,* covered by a cushion, is used to support the back of the neck.

The establishment of luxurious hairdressers' shops is one of the first things which the Japanese have borrowed from Europe. In the streets which have most retained a Japanese aspect, one may still see hairdressers at work behind high panes of glass framed in gold.

Plate BJE is a part of the same series of Keisai Kitao Massayoshi, to which we already owe Plates GB (No. III.) and BH (No. XV.). We find always the same knowledge of plants, which shows the artist to be at once botanist and artist, the same sentiment of nature, combined with a sureness of hand such that the artist disdains to outline his design in ink; he fills his brush with colour, and with the first strokes of it traces the tapering leaves of the iris expansive flowers of the iris, or the hanging clusters of the glycine.

Plate AFD shows us a *fukusa* of embroidered silk enriched with gold. We have already said (No. XVI.) that the *fukusa* served to envelop the package which a Japanese addressed to a friend, who returned it by the bearer.

At the outset the *fukusa* was nothing more than a sheet of paper. But towards the end of the seventeenth century it became an object of great sumptuousness, being adorned by paintings of masters or by rich embroideries. This one, which dates from the great period, represents two eagles on a gilded perch. The plumage of the birds is worked in white or grey silk, whose juxtapositions indicate the shape. One can see that the labour of embroidering

has not prevented the artists from giving the eagles all their naturalness of attitude, nor from rendering the cord which attaches them in all its suppleness.

Eagles thus made fast by a cord seem to have played an important part in the aristocratic life of the ancient Daimios. We find often in paintings, in prints, in bronzes, and in porcelain, this representation of birds of prey attached to a perch, or employed in the pursuit of birds of the higher flight—a favourite diversion of the Japanese aristocracy.

The first guard of Plate BBG is ornamented with two stalks of chrysanthemum in flower, forged and open-worked in iron by Kinai, of the province of Ichizen (seventeenth century), of whose work we have already presented an example (Plate BAI, No. XVIII.)

Of the three others, also in iron, but not signed, one is formed of two turnips with their foliage, vigorously hammered out. It is easy to see, from this guard, that all articles furnish material for the decorative artist, and that, even in an accessory to a weapon, no subject, however little warlike, was despised so long as the fineness of the execution gave to the bearer the refined pleasure of possessing a sabre which was a complete masterpiece. The author of the rectangular guard has been evidently under European influence; he must have had under his eyes the sword of some Portuguese adventurer. We know that the Portuguese landed in Japan towards the end of the sixteenth century. The artist in iron has imitated the pearl-like egrenement and the supple arabesques of a European arm.

This is a proof that, if Japanese art has preserved its independence, it has not been to such an extent as to shut out all inspiration from without. We see, on the contrary, that the Japanese have always welcomed a foreign suggestion, whether it be Chinese, Persian, or European, which has found its way to their shores. Their isolation should rather be attributed to the geographical position of their island, which is little accessible. The fourth guard is formed by the fantastic twining of a dragon about it.

The great bowl of Plate AIG is taken from the work of Nina-gawa, of whom we have spoken in Nos. XVII. and XVIII. It is a *katshi*, a bowl of pottery used for serving food. It is the make of Do-Natshi (after Nina-gawa), a celebrated ceramic artist, who derived his inspiration from the potteries of Kenzan.

In Plate BCD we find united subjects employed the most frequently in Japan, and which Mr. J. Brinckmann mentions in his article in the present No. (page 251). To the left are seen cherry-blossoms floating on the water, with the needles of the pines, after one of those recurrent frosts which often occur in Japan, where scarcely a spring goes by without our seeing the curious spectacle of cherry-blossoms under a layer of snow.

In Plate BBB the decorator has brought together spring and autumn, by uniting on one page the early flower of the *sakura* with the leaves of the momidji, which the wind is already bringing down from the branches.

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SEPARATE PLATES.

AFD. **Embroidered Fukusa.**

BCD. **Two Industrial Models.** Flowers on the Ice.

BCI. **Small Sketches.** By Hiroshigé.

BBG. **Four Sabre Guards.**

BJE. **Flowers.** By Keisai Kitao Massayoshi.

AGA. **Landscape.** By Gueami.

BBF. **Two Birds.** By Shunboku.

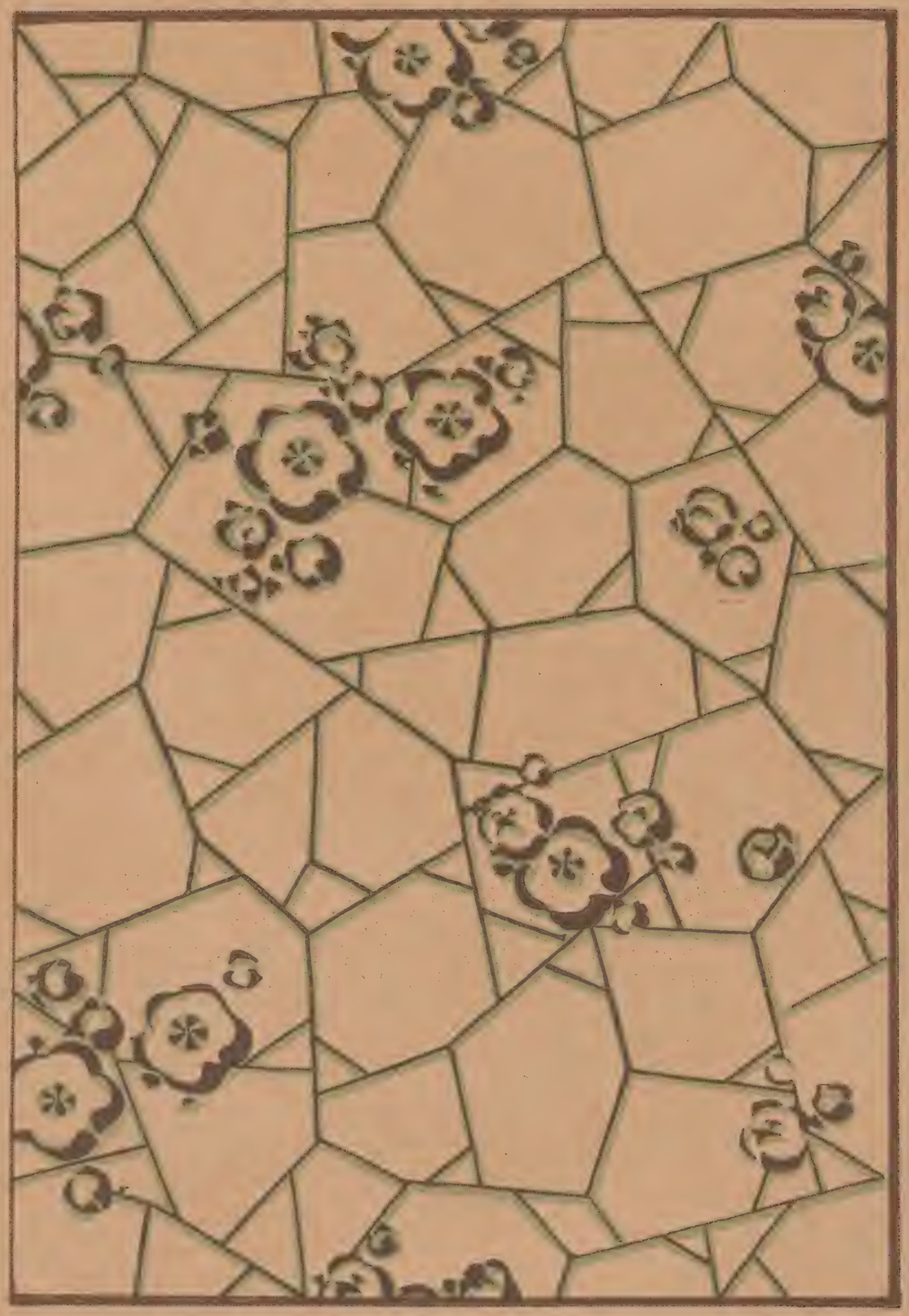
BBI. **Small Sketches.** By Keisai Yeisen.

BBB. **Industrial Model.** Leaves and Flowers.

AIG. **Bowl of Pottery of Kioto.**

No. XXI. will contain an Article by Mr. Ary Renan on "Animals in Japanese Art."

GRAV. IMP. PAR H. J.



GRAV. IMP. PAR GILLOT.

ANIMALS IN JAPANESE ART.

Inhabitants of a country which seems at one moment virgin forest, at another a vast and skilfully arranged park, the Japanese have turned their best faculties of observation to the flora and the fauna of their magnificent island. They have studied especially the animal kingdom with infinite perseverance. From the greater animals to the smallest examples of animal life, they have examined all branches of natural history. This is manifest from their works of art, faithful reflections

of their taste, their religion, and of their simple philosophy. Both in the greater as in the lesser arts, animal life everywhere has its part. Geometrical ornament is rare with the Japanese; ornament derived from the natural world everywhere takes its place, whether in architecture, sculpture, painting, carving, or in pottery. One might say that the amateur—everyone in Japan is more or less an amateur—when he returns home, desires to see about him the landscapes of the outer world, the flowers of his garden, and the animals which are familiar to his eye, so as never to be separated from them.

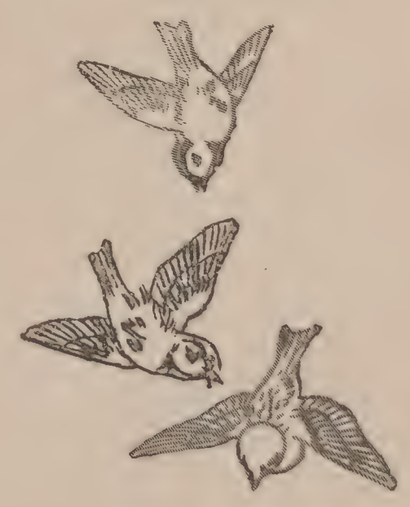
We propose here to inquire how Japanese artists have interpreted the animal creation. It must be confessed, however, that our first emotion is one of surprise at finding in them such a preference for animals which have but a small place in our Western art. Our races have always, so to say, turned their regards upwards. They only see the sublime. It is but quite lately that the external world and the inferior beings which inhabit it as well as ourselves have received attention.

The fauna of Japan are, though without doubt more abundant and less tame, with slight exceptions, identical with those of our climes, and less subject to destruction. It is not therefore strangeness of species which arrests our attention in the works of Japanese art which depict animals. What matters it that at Nipon tortoises are represented with striped tails, and that the *malacoptera* have eyes starting out of their sockets. What really astonishes us is to see the attention bestowed by true artists on such objects in preference, we should say, to subjects that we should deem more worthy.

Let us then compare our point of view with that of the Japanese in presence of nature. In a general way it may be said that we do not bestow artistic

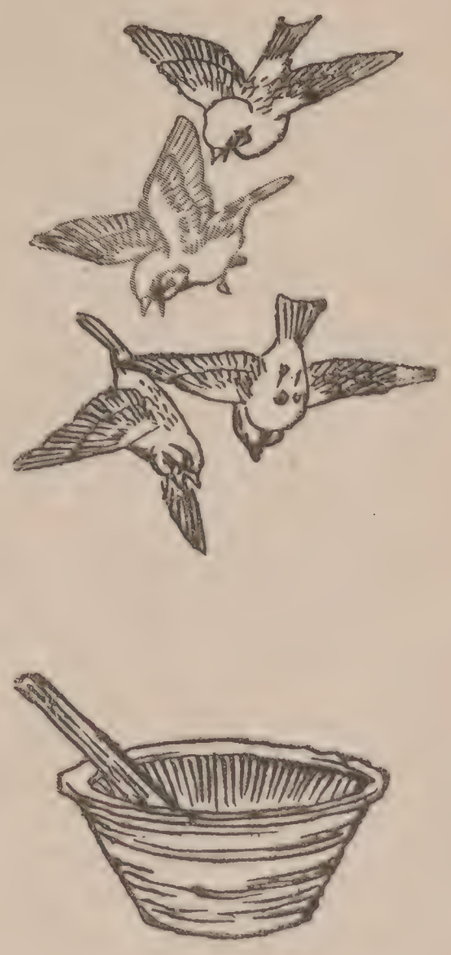
attention on the animal world. The idea of deriving a work of art from a carp or from a stork has never come to us. It is, on the contrary, inborn with the races of the extreme East. Domestic animals, however, the companions of man, associated with his everyday life, are an exception.

Painting and sculpture have bequeathed us admirable horses, which have a share, it might be said, in the moral character of their riders. These animals are for us peoples of a Western race symbols or even attributes. This is their title to a place in art. With us the eagle is an emblem of supremacy, as the lion is that of strength; the dove is consecrated to Venus; the bee is an emblem of industry. But the ape, the quail, the crab, symbolise no quality, no abstract idea, are not classic, and do not accompany any mythical personage. Thus the first are often represented in our arts, and the second are never seen. The contrary is the case in Japan. There the humblest animals tempt the artist. He gets a subject of decoration from the first living thing he comes across. He knows no symbolism and recognises no aristocracy in the animal kingdom. He is on the look-out for a subject; he often finds it at his feet.



The industrial arts of Japan, therefore, offer us a living and moving picture of all creation. Never,* in order to decorate an ewer, a court dress, stirrups, the hilt of a sabre, or a cup, have our artists dreamt of using creatures that they did not see. Classical literature seems to have ignored that there were fish in the sea or insects in the grass. The lesser animals are unregarded by the mass of the people. The East would seem to have been the first to perceive them; witness its fable and popular story, original conceptions of that vast world.

The intensity of observation of the Japanese seems to have grown in a proportion inverse to that of the scale of beings. *Artistic Japan* has already laid before European eyes hundreds of examples of what we have just been saying. I propose to accompany its beautiful illustrations by a few commentaries.



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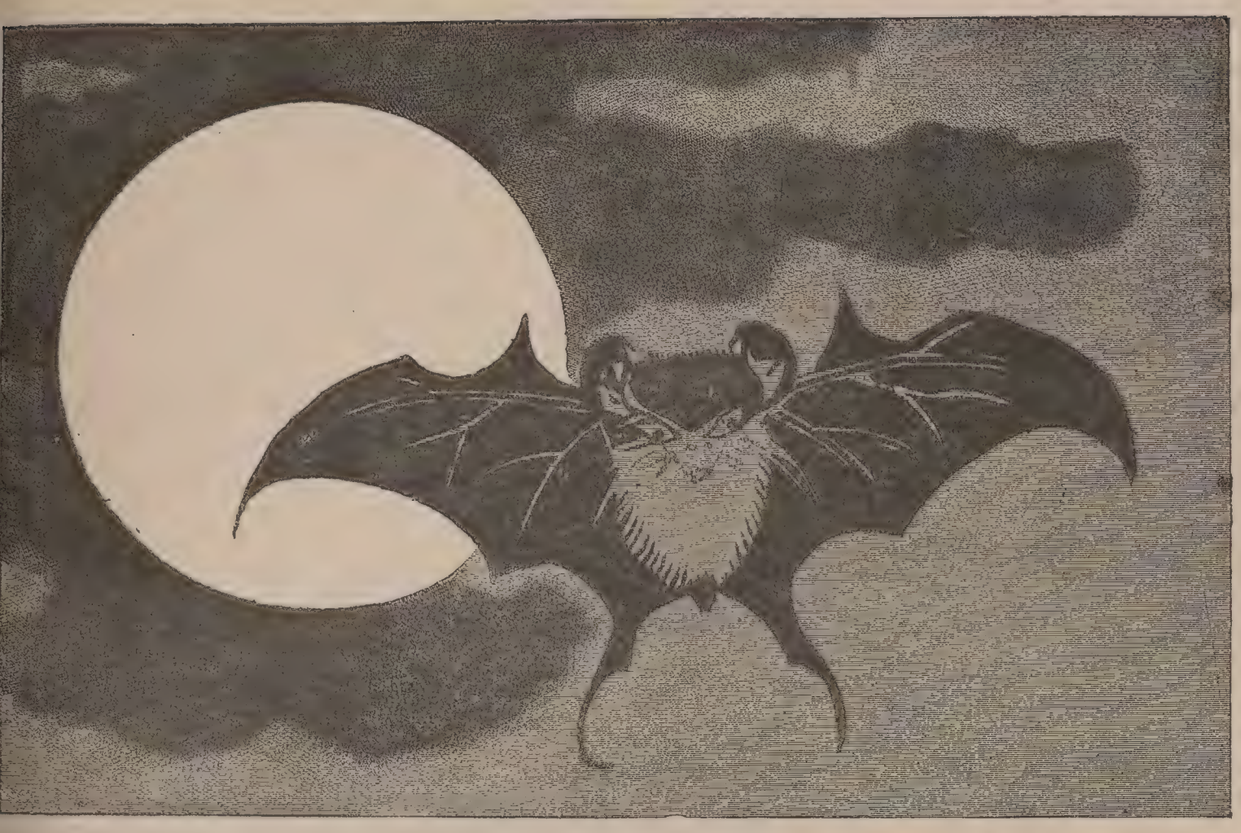
* Palissy's "rustic" ware marked an era.

We have said that homely animals are those which Japanese art has represented most frequently and best. On account of this preference, we are often hard upon the pictures which Japanese art presents us of the horse, the ox, the dog, or the cat. These pictures do not seem to us such as we might expect of such conscientious artists. However, let the reader for a moment suspend his judgment. We will approach the question which has just been touched upon. The important point is to establish out of hand that our classification of the animal kingdom, and of objects divided into noble and ignoble, is not recognised in the studios of the far East. There man is not the axis of creation. For the artist, the world is rather a circumference infinite in extent, of which the centre is everywhere that his eye can reach. There is no ostracism for him, he has a kindly feeling for all created things, a kindliness which reaches beyond the animal kingdom, over all the vegetable world, and which extends itself even to minerals, and procures for the Japanese artist the uses of substances new and surprising. Iron, wood, and stoneware are not regarded by them as vile substances. And when the question arises of ornamenting these substances, nothing is regarded as vile; the artist as readily catches the likeness of a blade of grass as that of a tree, and is not ashamed to place an insignificant animal on the same level with man himself.

The Japanese have a great affection for the inhabitants of the air; here it is that their superiority is incontestably shown. Here are the birds of prey, the eagle of the mountain, with terrible eye, the falcon arrayed for the chase with his melancholy captive air, the pigeon, the plump quail with its softness of plumage, the tall stork so proud-looking, the lazy duck, the sulky crow, and doves innumerable.

The intimate character of each species, its ways, its anatomy are here the subject of the artist's tender study.



The execution varies with each of them, symbolising the animal, attacking with sure or softly caressing hand. Painting and sculpture share together, without impoverishing either, what might be the domain of each. For example, painting is never more waving and finely graded than in rendering the flight of pigeons on the brink of a well; more firm or incisive than when reproducing the pinions of a bird of prey, more alert and more humorous than in presenting the idea of a scattered flight of sparrows. Never was sculpture more softly turned or moulded than to shape a duck, more *percée* than to carve a crane. Never was embroidery made more splendid than in throwing on the satin a strutting cock. The inner spirit, the soul, so to say, of these creatures so remote from ourselves, seems by the magic of art to have transmigrated into the bronze or on to the silk. They are indeed evoked entire. But this penetration of the Japanese artist, the intimacy in which he seems to live with his model, are, if possible, more perceptible still to those who take the pains to study his manner of rendering, in art, the batrachia, reptiles, the world of waters, the lower forms of creation, misunderstood or unknown, our attention to which takes the form of compassion, or of total disregard.

These creatures are avenged in the art of Japan.

There are the tortoises, the strange little tortoises which, alive, look as if they were made of bronze; there are the frogs and the toads, the snails, the snakes, the crabs, the crayfish, the carp, the jelly-fish, on a pinch even mere shrimps, or the tiny shell, all that is tossed about in the gulfs of the Pacific or in the fish ponds and the plantations.

According to circumstances, this or that makes a

kakémono, a bronze, a netzké, an ornament for an arm or a decoration for a tea-pot. Our self-conceit has to admit that there are tortoises, crabs, and frogs turned out there which, by reason of their unsurpassable perfection, may count among the most deceptive works which have issued from the hand of man. One is tempted to cry out upon modelling after nature in the presence of this carp of bronze which raises itself on its tail, in the presence of this twining serpent in the possession of M. Cernuschi. But the work of the pencil brings them before us with equal vividness on the silk of the kakémonos or on the pages of an album.

Still, there are more things yet in the world of animated nature. There are the animalculæ, the insects of the earth and air, those creatures which, distributed as chance may direct, form a spontaneous decoration for field and forest. The Japanese have set themselves to imitate nature in its minutest forms. They have bent themselves towards the ground, and their eye, in regarding such trifling objects, has lost none of its power of adaptation. Suppose it to be summer? The windows are open and the minute world enters at its ease, and alights upon the furniture. There will perhaps be a dragon-fly on the chest, a grasshopper on the wall, a sparrow on the sword, ants mounting to escalade the bouquet holder, moths on the curtains, a couple of butterflies on the stool, the beautiful stool of black lacquer. Art comes in and fixes all that. It gathers up the thousand little nonentities and turns them to account charmingly. It immortalises these frail creatures, if that may be said in the West.

ARTISTIC JAPAN.

The lacquerer, the painter, the ceramic artist, and the sculptor emulate the transparency of the wings of the dragon-fly and the delicacy of the antennæ of the capricorn beetle.

This has been our great astonishment on making the discovery of the arts in the far East. Our first instinct has been to treat the Japanese as a near-sighted race without taking the trouble to ask ourselves if we were not defective in the opposite direction. It is true that the Japanese have a magnifying-glass to show them these lower organisations, those which seem most cunningly formed, those whose build is obscure and hidden. But does not our philosophy of nature teach us that these creatures are æsthetically equally refined with our own conformation, which alone we seem to take pride in.

I am firmly convinced that if, by the aid of the microscope, the Japanese had become acquainted with more minute forms of nature, they would have derived subjects of art from them. If they had seen, as we see them, the diatomaceæ, which are as the sand of the sea, and the animalculæ which the dredge brings us from great depths, we should find them on their fans, on the little boxes, on the scabbards of their arms.

This attention bestowed upon little things is indeed very suggestive. We find in it the characteristic quality of all Japanese art, an astonishing power of observation, such as is at once the sign of an artist and of an accomplished philosopher.

But there is a never-ceasing contradiction in the art of the far East. Side by side with observation, there is tradition. Neither of these, strange to say, goes beyond its own domain. Both dwell on good terms as neighbours, there is neither clashing nor dispute. The Japanese wonders not to see his favourite artist examine a particular object with surprising patience, or employ, in order to interpret another, a ritual full of conventional formulæ and consecrated canons.

ARY RENAN.

(To be continued.)

DESCRIPTION OF PLATES.

Plate BCG reproduces an indian-ink painting by Kano Tanyu (seventeenth century). The scene represented speaks for itself. One need not explain the accident to the horseman who is made to bite the dust. We often, in Japanese albums, find horses the drawing of which puzzles us. This question will be dealt with by Mr. Ary Renan in his second paper on animals. But the animal here represented is not strange in our eyes.

It is not unlike certain types of our own country, with a thick coat, sturdy limbs, prancing however at times, as testified by this plate. This one must gallantly have carried the old daimios into battle. On this occasion it is but a simple traveller who has not been able to keep his seat. The sense of fun in the Japanese is once more seen in the inglorious fall of the cavalier and in the preternaturally satirical expression of the horse which has accomplished the feat.

It is sumptuously caparisoned. As usual, the Japanese saddle is simple, spacious, and convenient, an improvement probably of the Asiatic harness, whose stirrups and general characteristics are preserved. The seat is covered with worked leather or with cloth, and a carpet of skin softens the shock on the back of the horse. The pommel and the cautle are generally of lacquered wood, and some lordly saddles are adorned with marvellous incrustations of ivory, enamel, or worked metal. The stirrups are of massive metal, bronze or iron, worked, inlaid, or enriched in a thousand ways, but there are no spurs as with Turcoman stirrups. The bridle is simple; the Japanese do not use a curb, they use the simple bit, which we know does not act on the animal's mouth with equal force. A girth, a chestband, a crupper, and a cord of silk complete, with a piece of carpet spread over the haunches, the equipment of the horse. The cavalier is seated in the Oriental manner, with knees much raised by the stirrups.

Plate BJH is part of the celebrated work of Hokusai, the *Shashin Gwafu*, which has already given us Plate IC (Part VII.), IB (Part IX.), and IF (Part XVI.). The practised hand of the artist has caught with great ease these two hares in familiar attitudes. In this page, as in all those which compose the *Shashin*, Hokusai has systematically suppressed all external ornament, thus concentrating with intensest energy our attention on the main object. We know that for the Japanese, no subject, no animal, however low according to our scale of created beings, is deemed unworthy the artist's attention. The hare has a singular attraction for the Japanese, from the day that it became naturalised with them. We see this animal represented in ancient Chinese paintings, but we do not know when it was imported into Japan. It has always been very scarce there, so much so as to represent a considerable mercantile value. This value was increased or diminished according to the times, or by the influence of fashion, to an extent unheard of. The hare has never been used for food, it lives in the houses in the same manner as the cat, another animal in which Japan is ornamental rather than useful. From time to time the hare has been the object of a speculative mania, similar to that which prevailed

in Holland with regard to tulips. Prices reached enormous sums, with great disparities, not merely because of the species, but according to the colour of each specimen, whether it had a more or less fanciful brown, black, or white spot on the tail or the ear. The last act of this mania dates no farther back than twenty years, and the prices of certain varieties were sent up to £50 or £60. The Japanese government became uneasy at such veritable gambling, and proclaimed an absolute stoppage of the sales. But the speculators, who held important stocks, sought a means of evading the enactment. They bethought them of the freedom enjoyed under the European concession at Tokio, and on their free territory went on shamelessly with their sales under the borrowed name of the first sailor or adventurer who presented himself. The government made representations to the European consuls, who had to acknowledge their inability to restrain the sale of hares by their countrymen. This had assumed the proportions of a public scandal, when an astute minister hit upon the device of placing a high tax on the hares. The next morning the river was ploughed by great boats laden with the carcases of hares which had been killed to escape the duty.

Plates BAA and BAB, united at the back, reproduce a double print of Utamaro, who was above all the painter of women. This marked predilection arose from his temperament; if the artist comprehended women so well, it was because the man was a lover of them. Utamaro died young from having loved too well.

He painted women of all ranks in life, at all moments of daily life. In these prints great ladies swept along with majestic air, courtesans in rich attire, down to the humblest and meanest people. Here is the simple servant of a *tsha-ya* (tea house). The inscription tells us that she served in the house Maniba. We see her bringing a teacup, while with the other hand she carries the tray with a handle, *tabako-bon*, in which are arranged the smoker's apparatus.*

It is easy to understand from this scientific colouring, this art in disposing drapery, this grace of walk, and in the whole person of the woman, that Utamaro's prints were the rage, and that the infatuation spread as far as China, whence came, according to the Japanese books, numerous orders. It was, indeed, in order to meet this constantly increasing taste that Utamaro, in search of new subjects, of surprises for his admirers, of *tours de force* in his craft, imagined the ingenious composition which is before us.

It is the same woman seen in front and from behind; but in the original the cleverness consists in showing under a double aspect this figure on the same piece of paper, no bigger than a piece of peel, the face printed on one side and the back on the reverse with such an exactness of correspondence that the sheet of paper held up to the light exhibits but a single person: gown, waistband, headdress, the oval of the face, cup and tray are superposed with an absolute exactitude of correspondence.

The landscape of plate BBA is by Keisai Kitao Massayoshi, like that which we published in No. XVIII. (Plate BAC). This artist had the most versatile talents. He has with equal

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* Tobacco used to be brought to Japan by the Portuguese; *bon* means a tray.

dexterity given us figures sketched by a single stroke, full of movement, character, and fun, landscapes, land and water animals.

It is a very suggestive piece of instruction to study methods of work so simple and so rapid applied as those used in the execution of these sketches. Examine closely the way in which the boats, the roofs of the houses, the pines, the slopes even are represented. We shall find the touch summary, almost hasty, like that of scene-painting. Then look at the whole and see what consummate experience has gone to convey a just impression of this bay viewed by the artist from the top of some rock which dominated his landscape.

Plate BCB brings together several sketches—a flight of geese passing before the disc of the moon, very high and far off; a swallow which has built its nest on a light trellis of bamboo, hanging, perhaps on purpose, under the eaves of a roof; little fish which follow the current of water; a spirited horse which a woman stops by placing her foot on the trailing rein—a reminiscence of some graceful legend such as are frequently met with in the drawings; two cedars, whose contorted branches are darkly thrown out upon the sky, which is lighted by a quarter moon; lastly, a stag with slender limbs, which must have been designed to serve as a model for the decoration of a box in lacquer.

Plate AJI represents on the left a sparrow, a kind of foul bird, perched on a rock near a cascade and on the right the summer teal (*Querquedula Crecca*) which sulks in a melancholy way amid a winter landscape. We will not repeat what we have said of the fidelity of representation the Japanese bring to bear upon animals, which seems as if intended for the illustration of a zoological treatise, where each animal is shown in the scenes he lives in.

Plate AGF reproduces a waistband ornamented with chrysanthemums in worked silk, of the seventeenth century. We refer the reader to the explanations already given with our plates of fabrics, especially in No. XIX. We shall continue to draw on the immense treasury of precious Japanese fabrics, so brilliant and harmonious.

The industrial model in Plate ACB requires explanation. One might suppose that the knots which are found mingled with sacred cranes, are due only to the fancy of the decorator; but that would be a mistake. These knots are formed of a substance only found in Japan, the *noshi*, which is made with filaments of a crustacean called *awabi*, a shell fish which, besides, furnishes the mother-of-pearl which the Japanese so often make use of. They have succeeded in making these pieces of a length which suggests strips of paper. This manufacture is intended solely for a symbolic use in the great festivals, such as that of the new year. It is one of the attributes of the fête, among which are those of the tortoise or the crane, emblems of long life. The propinquity of the *noshi* and the crane is not, then, accidental, and their conjunction is not a violation of that law which the Japanese have never broken—as we are sometimes at first sight tempted to fancy—the law of unity of idea in the same decorative *ensemble*.

Plate BDB depicts a fabric dotted with fans and birds.

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ANIMALS IN JAPANESE ART, by Mr. Ary Renan 263

DESCRIPTION OF PLATES 271

SEPARATE PLATES.

AGF. **Fabric of the Seventeenth Century.**

BCG. **The Horseman Unhorsed.** By Ittsho.

BJH. **Hares.** By Hokusai.

ACB. **Industrial Model.** Symbolic Knots and Cranes.

BAA. BAB. } **Servant at an Inn.** Double Plate. By Utamaro.

BBA. **Landscape.** By Massayoshi.

BCB. **Minor Sketches.**

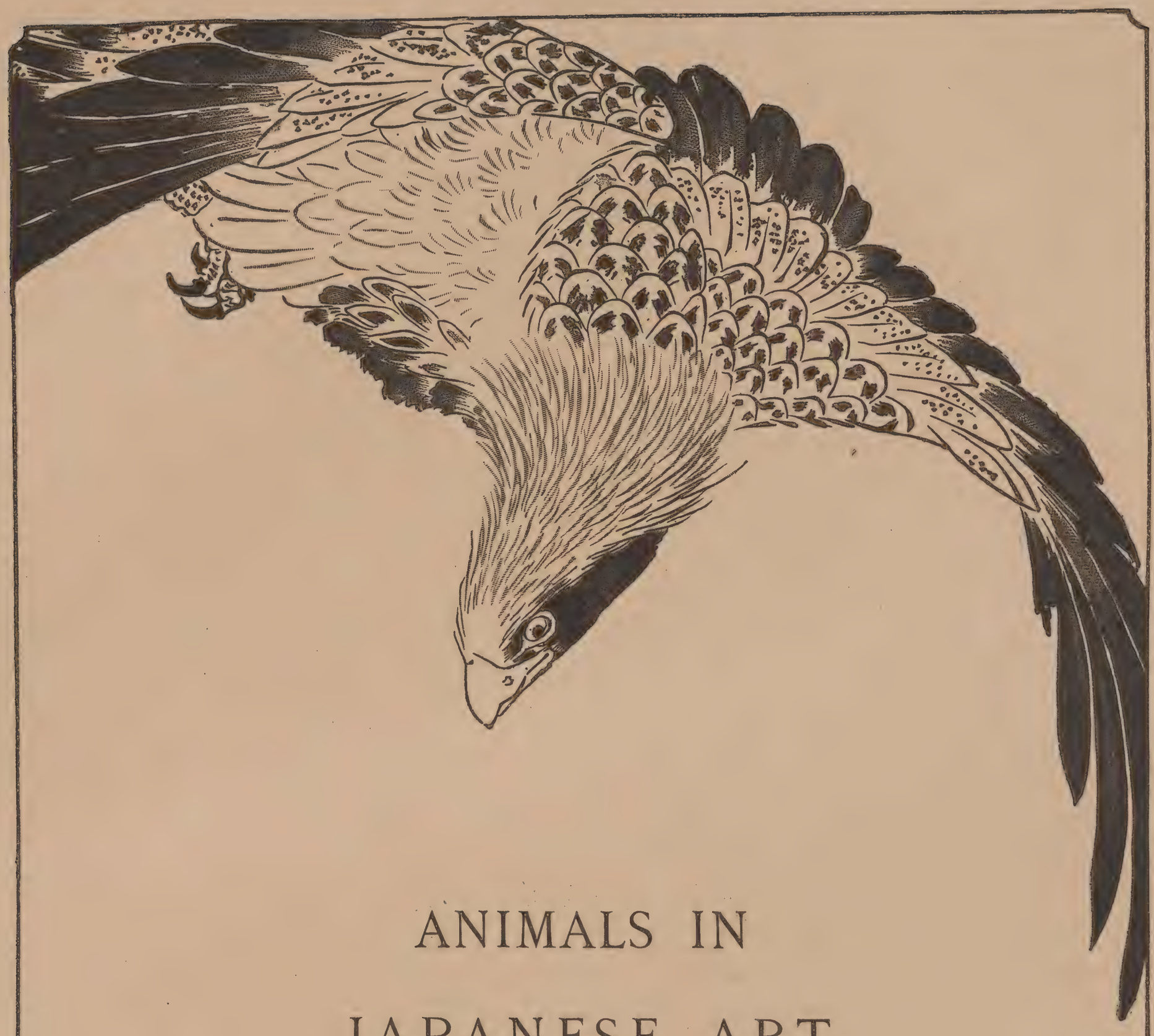
BDB. **Industrial Model.** Ornaments of a Fabric.

AJI. **Two Birds.** An Anonymous Study.

BJH

GRAV. IMP. PAR GILLOT.

GRAV. IMP. PAR GILLOT.



ANIMALS IN JAPANESE ART.

II.

We must return, as we promised, to the larger animals, to domestic quadrupeds. This is a problem of some consequence. In treating a simple point of detail, we shall find ourselves in the presence of several questions which have not been answered.

Generalising within permissible limits, we have said that the larger animals have not been treated by Japanese artists with the same accuracy or sagacity as the lesser created beings. No doubt, oxen, mules, or horses may be found satisfactorily rendered in

Japanese art; but there is no doubt that we should have looked for something more graphic from an art so excessively observative. The fact is, that in all which relates to the larger animals, the Assyrians and the Egyptians have, in vulgar parlance, spoilt us. It is impossible to imagine anything more realistic and at the same time more elegant than the flocks which appear on the bas-reliefs, or the paintings of Egyptian tombs of the best period; nor anything more alive and true than the equipments, the scenes of war and of the chase in which the Assyrians represent the horse or the wild animals of the desert. At Beni-Hassan, as on the gates of Kouyoundjik, nature itself seems to speak. Hathor, Apis, and Pacht are the heifer, the ox, and the cat, rendered with a marvellous simplicity. Whence comes then the apparent indifference of the Japanese, seeming to let themselves be beaten in this field?

It is of the horse that we would especially speak. In the presence of Japanese drawings of this animal we find ourselves beset by contradictory sentiments.

As to the questions of natural history and of animal migration, we find ourselves without precise or original information. With regard to China the case is one of embarrassment. There are in the China of our days so few horses that they are unknown in certain provinces. That is explained by the manner of conducting agricultural operations in the flat districts of China: it is well known how the canal system and water transport have developed. In mountain districts articles are carried on men's backs. There is therefore little need of beasts of burden which require such particular feeding as the horse. Still the horse has figured, as in our own history, in all the great Chinese wars; it is the habitual steed of the Moguls, against whom the great wall of China was built as a protection. Indeed the sign which signifies a horse in Chinese writing is one of the 214 primordial signs which are called keys, and besides, horses are common in Chinese art.

Japanese art has represented it still oftener.

In Japan the horse has certainly been in existence throughout all historic time, without our knowing whence or at what time it was imported. The horses are comparatively small, short, and muscular, also black and hairy right up to the nostrils. They are sensibly different from European horses, for ours have been produced by various methods of crossing and breeding unknown or impossible in Japan. We must not forget the insular, isolated position of Japan. On the other hand, large islands, Iceland as an example, possess a race of horses of small stature. Let us not, however, who see only Japanese drawings give way to first impressions: to blame would be rash. From their point of view the Japanese might remark that our designs are widely different from their models. In a word, we are not dealing with the same animal.

The horse presents itself, in the albums, under two different aspects.

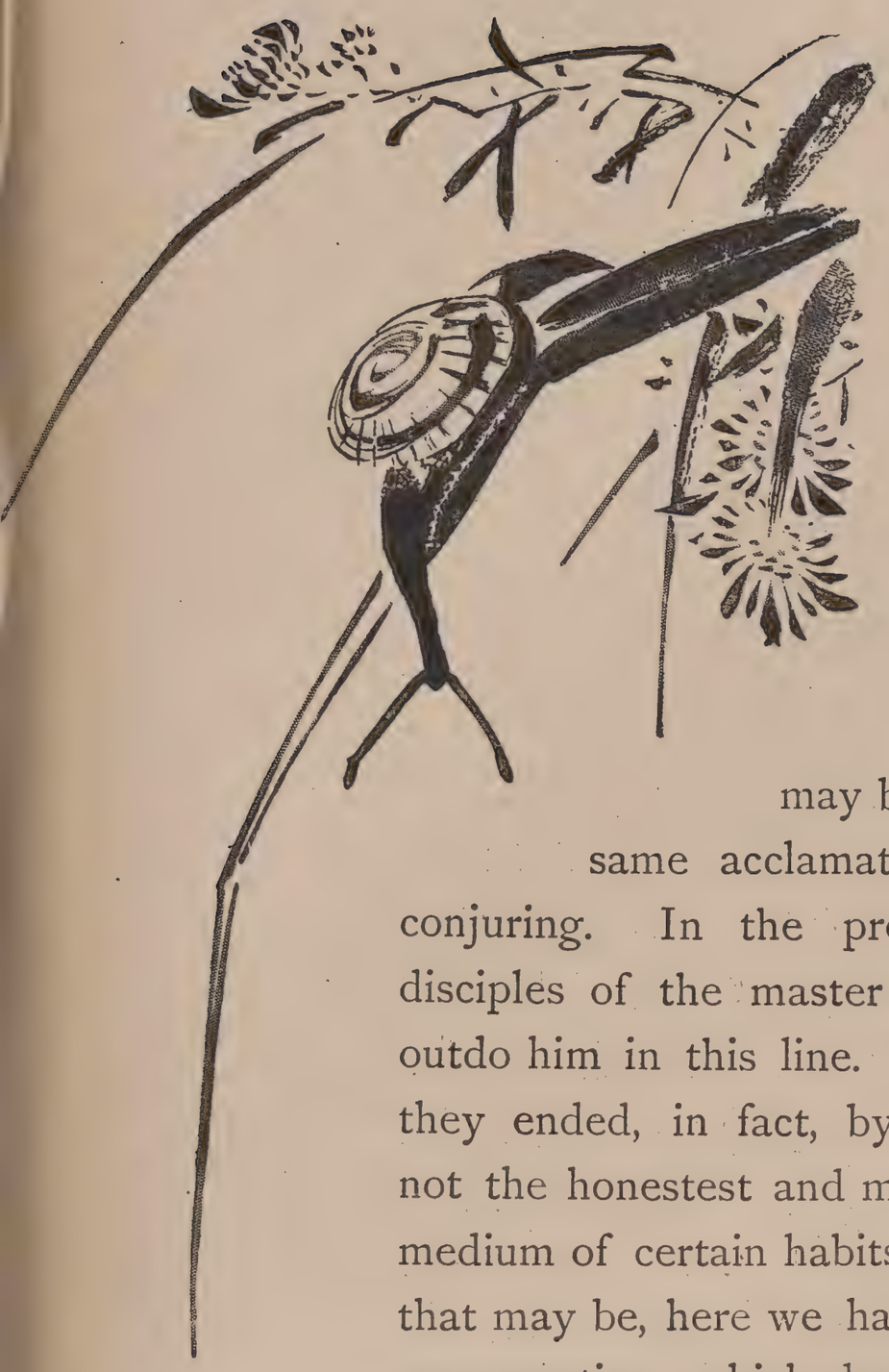
First of all we have the caparisoned riding horse, what we might call the knightly charger. His accoutrements are heavy and rich, adorned with tresses and tufts; the animal is reined short in, which gives him a stiff and proud look. He carries the great warlike lords. It is not the steed of the citizen or the priest: they ride the ox or the mule. His motions are very varied. At his greatest pace, as in walking, his step is sure and well accentuated. The documents in which we find the war horses are all the products of true Japanese art, of those artists or those schools which flourished before the introduction of Chinese ideas into the plastic arts of Nipon; much the same as were Gothic arts before the period of the Renaissance. In short, the European eye can dwell on these horses with pleasure. Associated with the national epics, with deeds of prowess known to all, they have, in the true sense of the word, the stamp of national art. There would be no problem if it were not for a second category. Here are horses, not mounted, not caparisoned, taken in their natural state. We see them, in the albums, rejoicing in their liberty until the time comes for

saddling: they stare, they rush, they gracefully make their toilet, they repose, or feed in security on the banks of the rivers. Thus the diversity of attitudes is great. Here the drawing seems to me imperfect, or rather incomplete. The eye is shocked, it has never seen anything so crude.

I have said the "drawing," not the "touch." The artists have imagined the horse of the second category, and turned him out with great strokes of the brush of Indian ink, which the Japanese engraving so well renders. Assuredly this is an imitation of Chinese methods. We know that in China the love of bold strokes is pushed to its utmost limit. Caligraphy holds an immense place in the examinations which people of condition undergo. A page of writing is there worth a fine picture, and, indeed, is the same thing. A piece of poetry is there estimated as much for the elegance of the characters in which it is written as for the beauty of the thought which is conveyed. This fat, wavy style of dashing in a stroke of the brush and finding there intrinsic value, is not of Japanese origin. But it has become, by rapid acclimatisation, a national style in Japan. It took the dilettanti by storm. They have bent themselves to it on their own account, just as one adopts an invention, without servile copying.

The causes of this rage, of which we certainly have no reason to complain, lie in the idiosyncrasy of the Japanese. It joins to the most subtle æsthetic capabilities, to a conception of art which is truly elevated, a simple and playful mind prone to games of fun, with a taste for the fantastic and unexpected, much like that of children who are ready to laugh at anything. Hence it came that *tours de force* had a place in art. Now, having observed that the horse lends itself as nothing else does to escapades of the brush, we must bear in mind that the horse in question is Japanese, a horse remarkable for its rounded structure. The first artists who used the

Bamboos under Snow



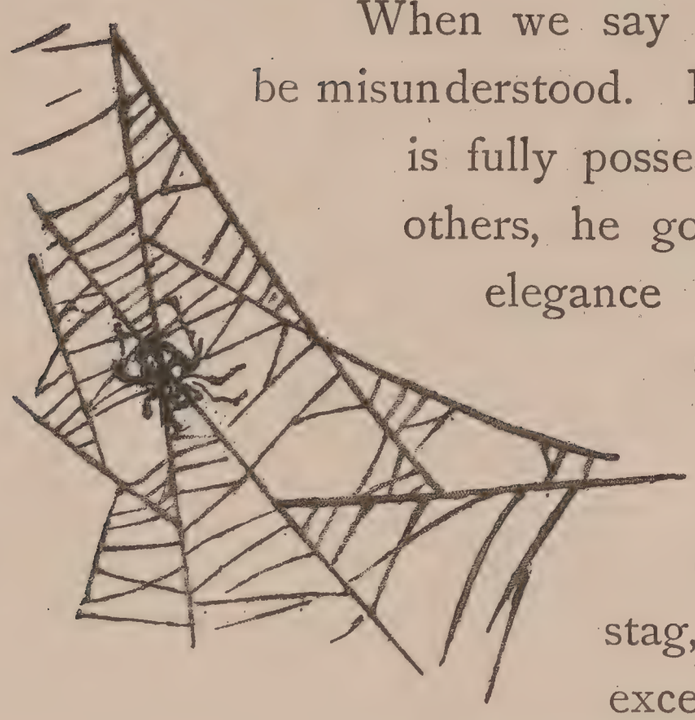
brush in the Chinese manner—now four centuries ago—abandoned themselves to a veritable game with the brush. There was rivalry as to who should render an arabesque with the most off-hand touch; the roundest, the most supple and sinuous, the most audacious, and above all, the most simple. One of the great artists of the old time made a sort of wager that he would hit off a spirited horse with four or five strokes of the brush.* The success obtained may be imagined. This work of art was received with the same acclamation that would have been accorded to a feat of conjuring. In the presence of such a triumph the contemporaries and disciples of the master racked their brains to see how they could rival or outdo him in this line. There was no other way of depicting a horse, and they ended, in fact, by only seeing the animal in this kind of way. Does not the honestest and most conscientious eye see things in nature through the medium of certain habits whether innate or such as are fashionable? However that may be, here we have methods of caligraphic design pushed to a certain exaggeration, which have influenced for all time not only the eye of the Japanese artist in drawing a horse, but also the eye of every Japanese who beholds a horse in flesh and blood—a retro-active effect of a work of art upon the organs of vision. On the other hand, the horse is, in Japanese art, full of life and movement. We might almost say that, with the Japanese, incorrectness of drawing is made up for by a quality which they endeavour after to a greater extent than we do. Whether it is a page of an album, or one of these horses galloping with his mane in the air, of which the painting sometimes adorns the temples, the animal is full of fire, of "go;" it almost seems to move and neigh.

This kind of flourish, these large dabs of ink, these almost brutal spots,

* See engraving, page 283.

give us marvellously the motions of the horse. You hardly discern the faults of the animal, he gallops in such a style, he goes at such a rate, he is so much alive on these few inches of paper.

It is evident that before pronouncing a severe judgment on the deformations inflicted by Japanese art on certain objects, we should enquire into the cause; for often the artists of the extreme East are in search of something different from ourselves. In the case we are speaking of, they are on the look out for a geometrical figure, curves and ellipses in place of the natural form of an animal. In other cases, they are possessed by the idea of accentuating the character of things and beings. Then they often seem to us to run into excess, but that is one of the principles of their art.



When we say that Japanese art is prone to exaggeration, let us not be misunderstood. Exaggeration may be used in an artistic sense. A painter is fully possessed by a thought; in order that it may be grasped by others, he goes into exaggeration. He is struck, for instance, by the elegance of the shape of the deer; he overdoes at pleasure the slenderness of the limbs and the smallness of the feet of the animal, in the same way that the Indians and the Chinese exaggerate the clumsy contours of the elephant. He is not drawing *a* stag, he is drawing *the* stag, by means of a process which we will call the artistic excess of the races of the far East.

The interpretation of the human figure is where we must seek for material for working out this large question. For the moment we will go on with our review of the animals. Each one must be taken by itself.

Thus, in the case of the dog and the cat, we must condemn. The Japanese dog has, as we know, a peculiar structure. It differs much more from our dog than does the Japanese horse from the European horse;* it is a little ornamental animal which is of no use whatever. It is not used in the chase, and could not be pointed to as an emblem of fidelity. Japanese designers have therefore had to depict the local race, an animal

* Dogs as we know them did not exist in Japan before Europeans came there. The Japanese, struck by the proportions of our dogs, did not understand them to belong to the same family as their little relative, and gave them the name *Comir*, reserving for the Japanese breed the name *ino*. *Comir* is nothing more than the transformation of the English words "come here," which they heard said by the owners of the first hounds they saw.

without shape and devoid of interest, and they have done it with a vengeance.

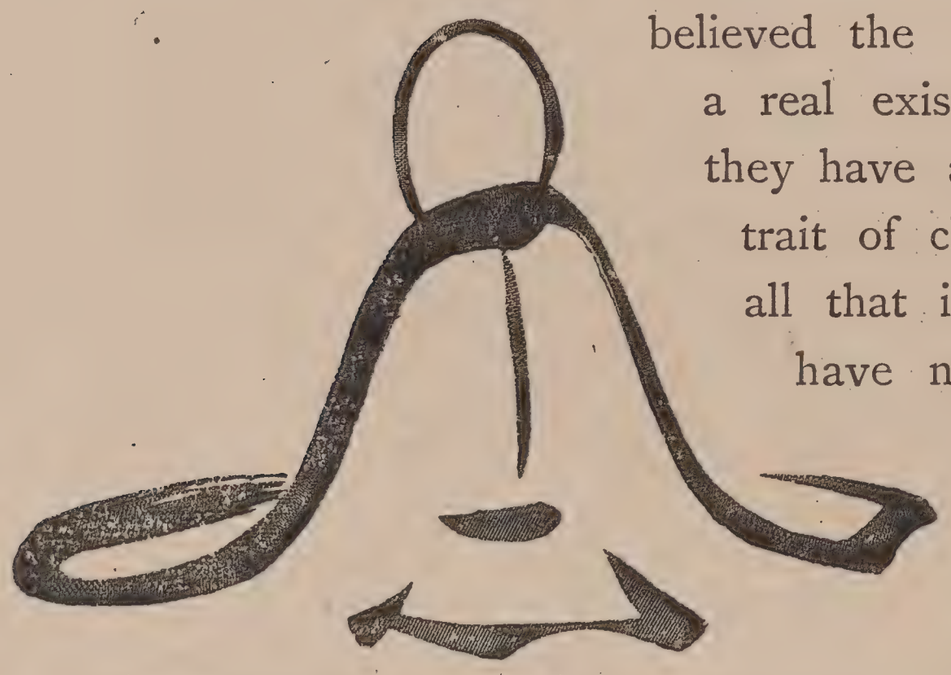
The Japanese cat is not more similar to ours; it is also an ornamental animal for ladies to carry about or lead with a string. Japanese plastic arts represent it with forms rounded to excess, an inert and lifeless mass. One must be aware of the difference of species to be able to accept this strange animal for a cat; we must, in a way, learn the meaning of this unknown shape. Just as, in Chinese writing, such a sign means "cat," this plastic shape signifies "cat;" and we are not to be surprised at that, since the Japanese are not so.

The Japanese have never seen the elephant near at hand, nor the lion. In sculpture, as in the graphic arts, they interpret these animals from the consecrated prototypes of China.

The tiger has fared better. We know several kakémonos which represent it with an accuracy of design, a vivacity and a character which are truly original. If an anatomist might have something to complain of, at least the ferocity of the animal is so well given that we might at all events call the tiger morally perfect.

The case of the monkey is more complicated. There again there are kakémonos, designs which marvellously render simious ways. These were a kind of smaller monkeys whose antics tempted the Japanese artists to such an extent that one of them, Sosen, made a name by devoting himself almost exclusively to the study of them. But we see sometimes under the name of monkey a strange animal, with outrageously long arms, a kind of fantastic chimpanzee. Perhaps the artist, smitten by the typical length of monkeys' upper limbs, has been minded to make it still

more extravagant, and in order to characterise the clutching, sudden, almost human gestures of the animal, has felt obliged to increase tenfold the length of the arms. It is, at all events, certain that the models of monkeys with long arms come from China. It is not less certain that in reproducing them the Japanese have treated them in a special manner quite different from what they employ in copying monkeys from nature in their own forests. The hair is not the same, and the head strikes one as peculiar. We may suppose then that the Japanese believed the Chinese monkey as they depicted it to have a real existence. Seeing it represented by the Chinese, they have asked no questions; for simple credulity is a trait of character with the Japanese, an acquiescence in all that is traditional, such as we find in people which have not been made sceptical by intercourse with neighbouring nations. The Japanese is nourished on legends, on narratives which his childish imagination never protests against. No freethinker has destroyed his belief in monsters, giants, or apparitions. *A fortiori*, the Japanese has no reason to doubt the existence of strange and unknown species in China and on the great continent. The deformations of the human race in height, leanness, size, &c., which we find in the albums, may they not be traceable to this source?

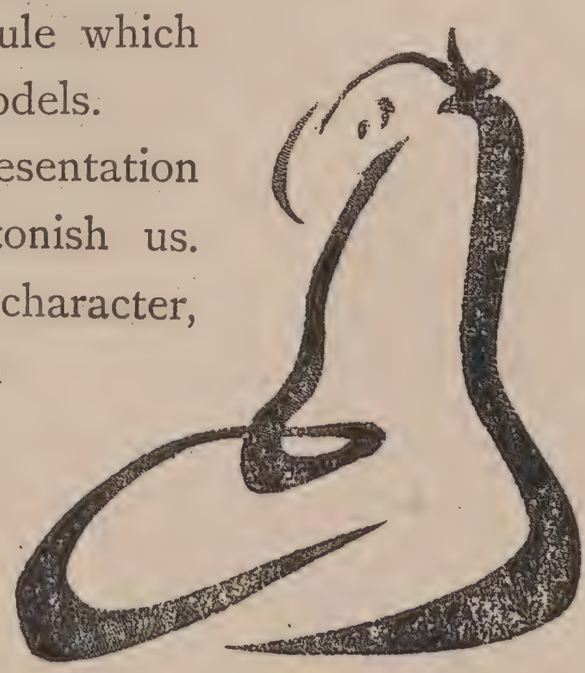


Caligraphic Amusement of a Seated Person, viewed from behind.

The mule—for we must so call the animal with long ears—is, we have said, the mount of the recluses, the *sennins*, who are not in a hurry. We have specimens in the bronzes and on stoneware, which, however deficient from the point of view of natural history, do at least exhibit to perfection the easy-going attitude of the animal and its rider. We may say the same of the ox. As to the donkey, curiously enough, this classic quadruped of the East does not seem to have been represented by the Japanese.

If the ass does not exist in Japan, it is because the mule which we see in the works of art is a copy of the Chinese models.

From these examples it is evident that in the representation of animals the Japanese have ideas which may well astonish us. With them exaggeration is but a powerful marking of character, only a love of expressive excess; they like certain



Caligraphic Amusement of a Seated Person, seen in profile.

shapes for their own sake,* because they lend themselves to graphic sleight of hand. And yet, after all, a love of nature seems paramount with them; a love which, as we have been saying, co-exists with principles which are apparently quite the reverse.

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* As Flaubert said, "art for art's sake."

ARY RENAN.

By Tanyu.

DESCRIPTION OF PLATES.

BBE, a double Plate, is an interesting study in Indian ink of a crow, caught in various attitudes, according to whether he rests with his head buried in his plumage, or standing, waits for prey to come within reach of his voracious beak.

We can convince ourselves here that Japanese art is not restricted to depicting birds or other objects by simple outlines hastily executed. The page which we here give is in lively contrast with that style of work which has become so familiar to us. As an opposite to the linear principle, which seeks to give the illusion of relief and modelling by means of white reserves, here the contours are not indicated by any outline properly so called; all the effects are produced by extreme closeness of filling in. But however solid the masses may be, however intense the blacks, no feeling of heaviness results. The gradations and the necessary lights are introduced with such skill in the proper places that the problem is solved to perfection.

It was only the masters of the old schools who could produce by simple dashes of the brush effects of such power and truth. The painting here reproduced seems to be from the hand of the celebrated Sesshiu, an artist of the XVth century, who, for his part, had borrowed his methods from the Chinese at the time of his wanderings in the Empire.

The composition is reproduced with the utmost fidelity, even to the marks of time, *edax rerum.*

Plate AIH is the portrait of an actor, after a coloured engraving by Shunyei. In Part IX., apropos to Plate BE, we pointed out that Shunyei belonged to the school of the Katsukawa, and that, like all the pupils of that school, he was indebted to Shunsho, the founder of the celebrated studio, for his family name, Katsukawa.

We then said that none could better drape a figure than Shunyei, letting the folds drop simply and naturally. We have a proof of it in this plate. The dress is soberly arranged; the material is very simple, but the ease of the folds is perfect, and harmonises well with the attitude of the figure, whose distinction shows him to be an aristocrat, represented in indoor costume. He is indeed an actor, a favourite subject with Katsukawa, and particularly of Shunyei, who has left behind him books and numerous series of prints on the subject of the theatre.

Plate AAD brings us a subject of perennial youth and never-failing charm from the feathered kingdom a limitless world in which we have already made many a discovery, and where a thousand more await our researches. What does it matter that the authors of these compositions still remain unknown by name? All bear the sign manual of that great amateur of all living nature whose name is Japan. Here it is the winter teal (*Querquedula crecca*) which is moving in the reeds which encircle a quiet pool.

Plate BCC reproduces some fragments from an album of Hiroshigé. It is a corner of landscape, a river bordered by cryptomerias and by reeds, and crossed by a wooden bridge which rests on an islet in the middle of the stream. Three great fish are moving about in the water, summarily indicated by a circular sweep of the brush. Here is a spider suspended by his web, which autumn wind will shake, we may suppose, for the maple leaves fall withered on the ground. And then a white cock and hen, hastily sketched with red crest, make patent this amusing souvenir in the eye of the Japanese.

Plate FH is a study of fish by Keisai Kitao Massayoshi, examples of whose landscapes and flower studies we have already given. Massayoshi treated all natural history subjects with the conscientiousness of a naturalist, taking the pains to study his model in different positions, as may be seen by these two red mullets, one in profile and one taken from underneath.

Plate AGE shows us two pieces of fabric. The subject of the larger one is a country road, with the ceaseless movement of porters, travellers and pilgrims, of horses of burden and carriages, and in the background trees and mountains, over which hangs the Fuji. The other is an arrangement of sheaves of rice, with predatory sparrows who are procuring their food from the harvest produce. A printer's mistake has reversed the position of this fragment as regards the first. Our readers have no doubt already turned the plate round, the flight of birds showing clearly how the page ought to be looked at. Here we have no longer fabrics made for dresses and waistbands, such as those we have hitherto represented. We do not know whether we have as yet sufficiently insisted on the very peculiar fact, that of every robe and waistband, of whatever value it might be, there was only produced a single copy at a time. From that we may infer the quantity which was turned out. But what may seem more extraordinary still, that the same is the case with little pieces as with those we now present. They were manufactured for tobacco pouches, carried by both sexes of all ages, and for portfolios which enclosed a little metallic mirror and small articles for painting the face. It is then in a greater number still than the larger pieces, that the small pieces of a very few inches, for which the loom must have been specially arranged every time, have been woven. Their subjects are more varied still than those of the dresses; animated scenes, landscapes, roads on which little figures are moving, &c., replace the amplitude of the great decorative subjects by a delicacy which is in proportion to the narrow proportions of the material.

Of the three bronze vases of natural size represented in plate BDH, the first is in the old Chinese style. Its squat shape, massive handles, its severe decoration, and its characteristic working out, denote an archaic vase for the temple. Contrasting with it, that in the middle, delicately open worked, is of pure Japanese style, somewhat effeminate withal, but yet of solid external shape; with its elegant foliage, it gains in grace what it loses in strength, and at the same time exhibits great cleverness in founding. The third vase, like the first, is of Chinese inspiration, especially as regards the ornamentation of palm leaves. But what we miss here is the fine robustness of the great periods. The hand of the artists has lost its power, and their eye is unaccustomed to all the great works of art amid which their ancestors had grown up. In accordance with a law fatal as it is universal, this diapason of power goes lessening from age to age. In the matter of bronzes, as with all artistic productions, firmness of touch is a sure sign of antiquity; the gentleness of handling revealed in our third vase is evidence of comparatively recent origin.

The industrial model of plate BEJ represents the anchors of boats on shingle. We will not lay stress on the curious result which the decorator has managed to get from this aquatic theme. We will content ourselves with observing that, desiring to carry off some of the heaviness of the anchors, he has sown the ground with ornament, taking care to derive it from the same domain. In fact, there are water weeds and mill wheels dispersed about the iron of these anchors.

The seven subjects of plate BDJ are serviceable, on account of their firmness, above all to workers in metal. They furnish graceful models for chiselling.

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DESCRIPTION OF PLATES 284

SEPARATE PLATES.

BBE **Study of a Crow in Indian Ink.** Double plate.

AIH. **Portrait of an Actor.** Coloured. After Shunyei.

AAD. **Winter Teal in Reeds, near a Pool.**

BCC. **Fragments from an Album of Hiroshigé.** A Corner of Landscape.

FH. **Study of Fish.** By Keisai Kitao Massayoshi.

AGE. **Two Pieces of Fabric.** A Country Road and Sheaves of Rice.

BDH. **Three Bronze Vases of natural size.**

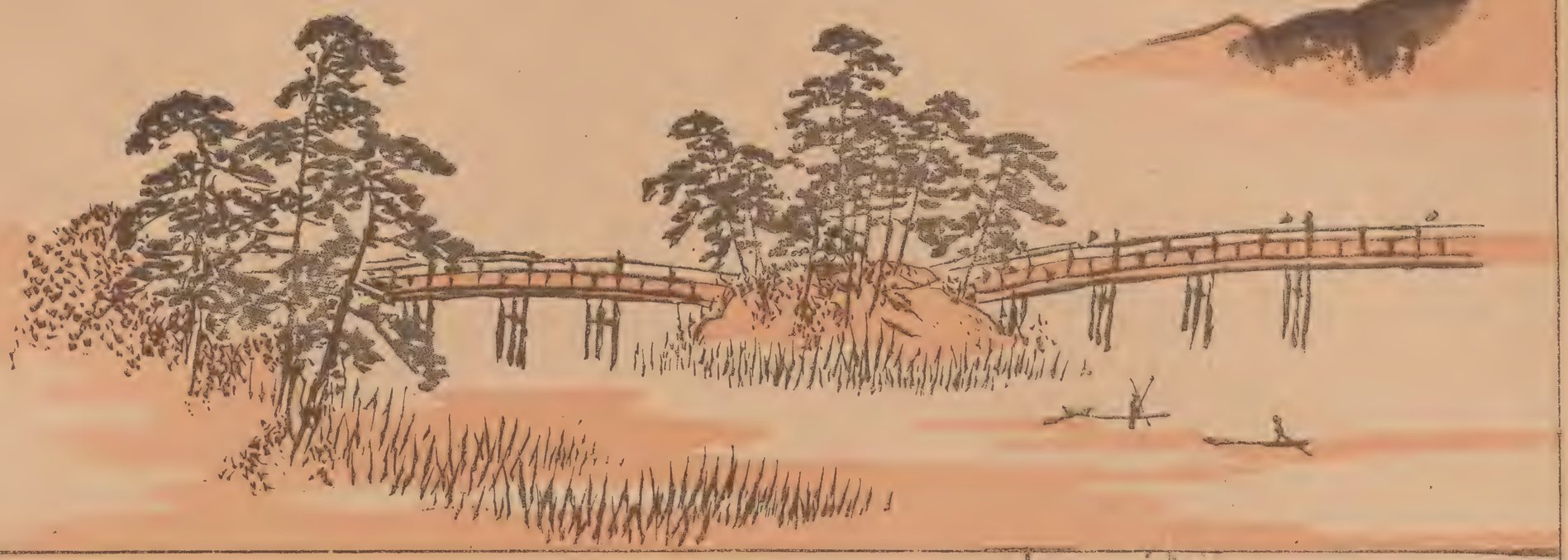
BEJ. **Industrial Model.** Anchors on Shingle.

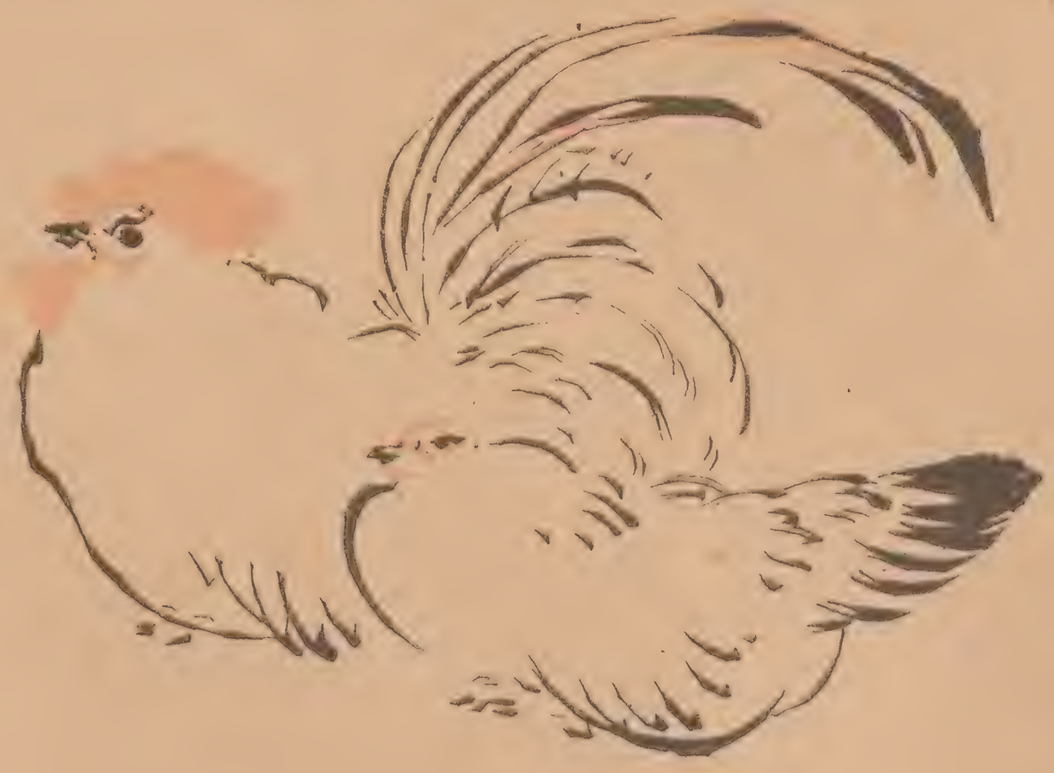
BDJ. **Models for Chiselling.** Seven subjects.

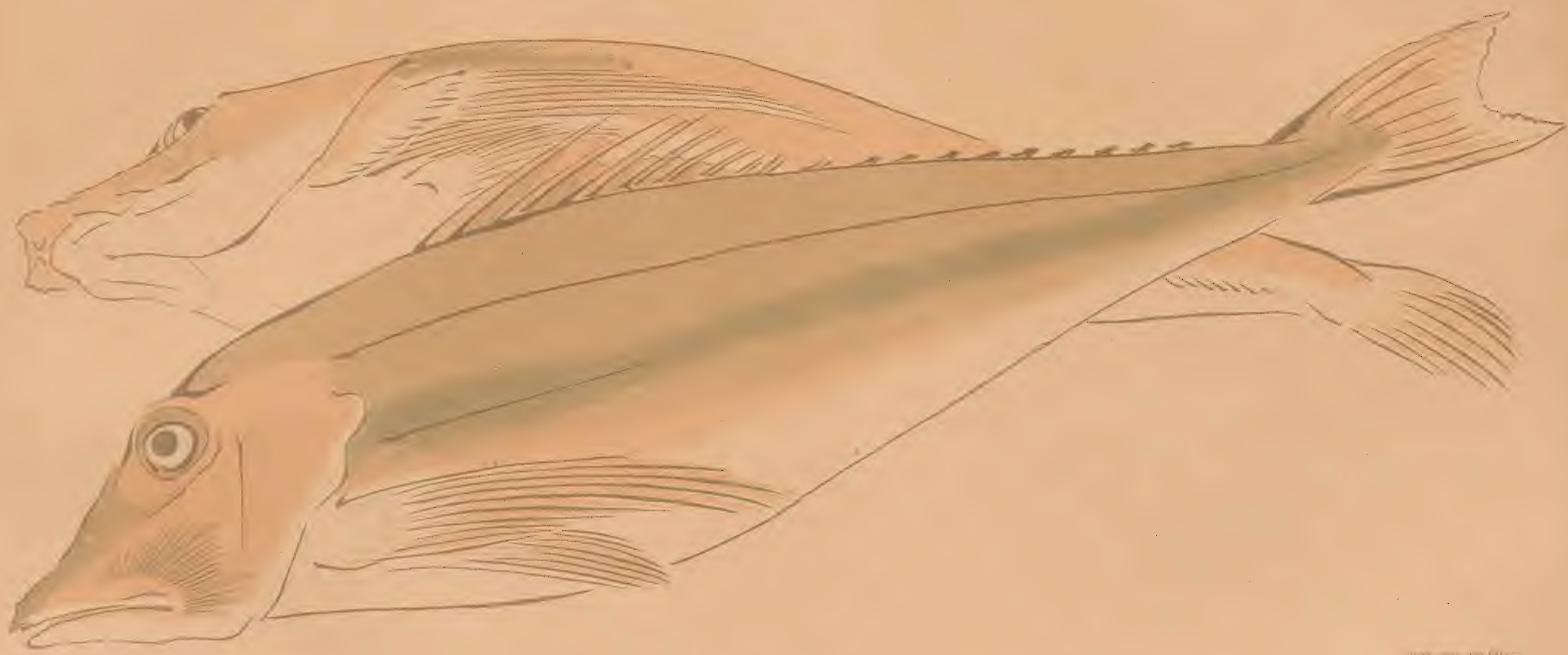
The next Number will contain an "Essay on Korin," by Mr. Louis Gonse.

GRAV. IMP. PAR GILLOT.

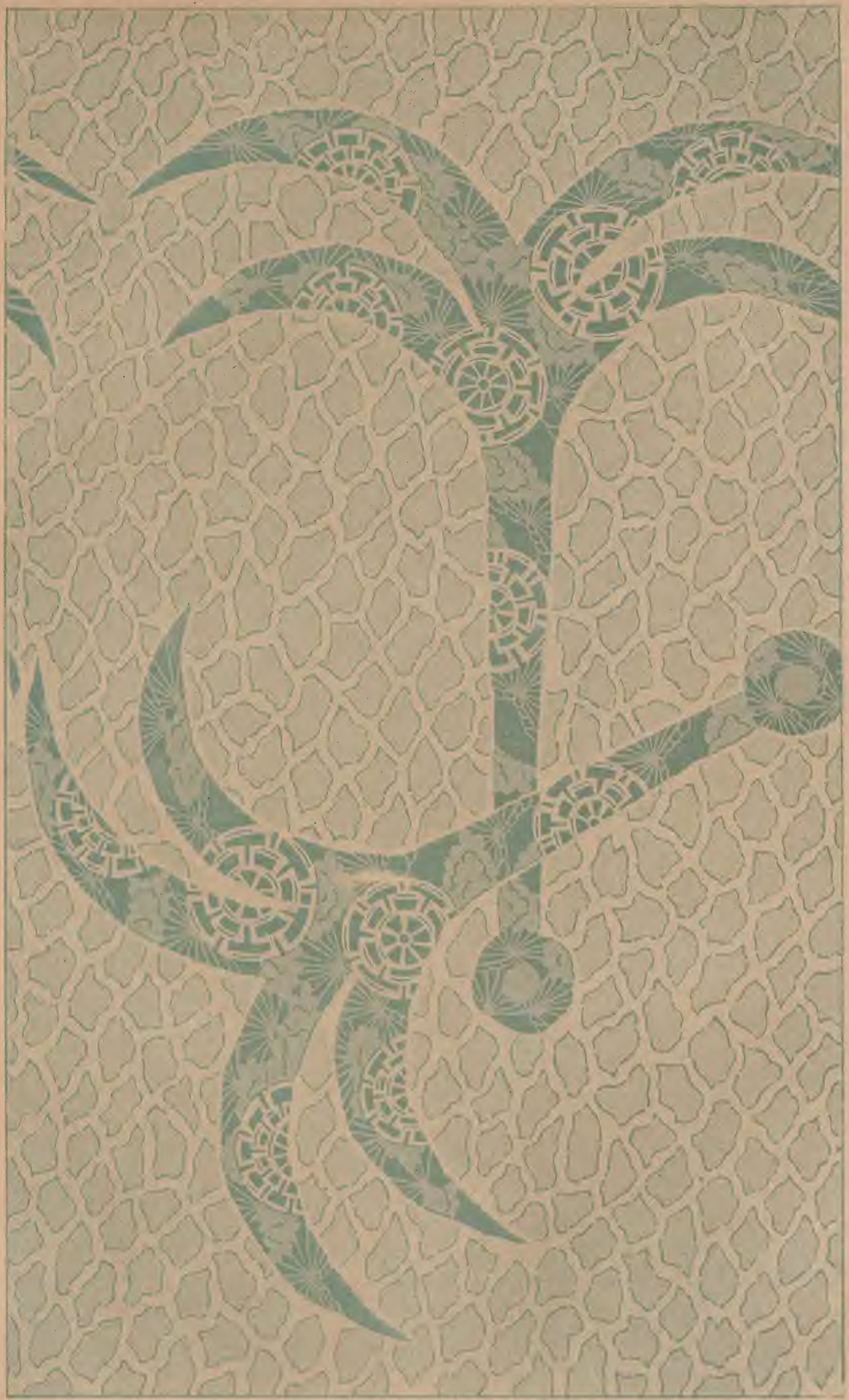
GRAV. IMP. PAR GILLOT.







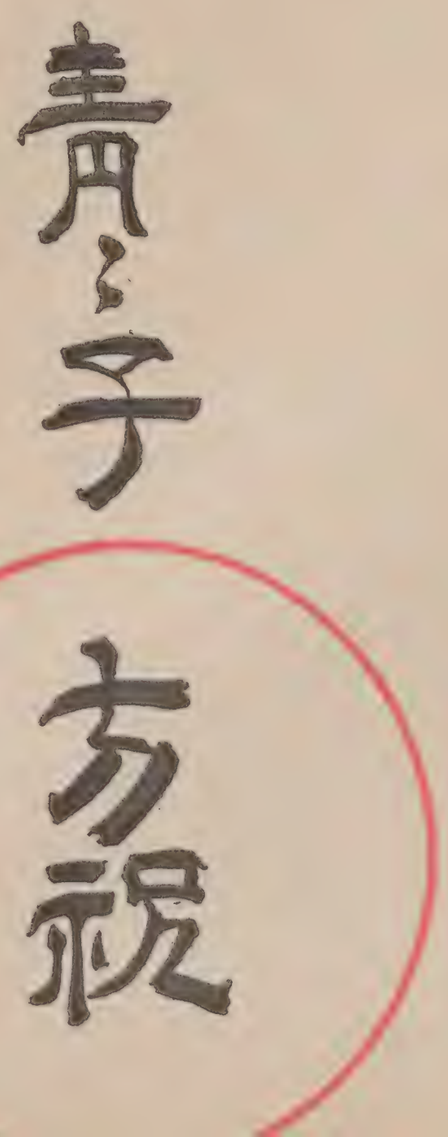
BDH



KORIN.

Korin! I like the name, the turn of it, and the rhythm. It undulates, trails along, and has an air of antiquity about it which practically amounts to a picture. It awakens in the true Japanese amateur, the amateur who is at all bitten, heady sensations, and, as it were, a particular vibration which is the very emanation of this strange and surprising individuality. I am one of those who believe in affinities of names and ideas, and I must confess it, who attribute a mysterious sense to the music of such or such an arrangement of syllables. The name of Korin marvellously suits the art which he represents.

Korin is in the first rank of those who have carried to the highest pitch the intuition and the genius of decoration. His style is integral,



Translation of this signature: Seï-seï-shi.
Seal: Hotshiku.

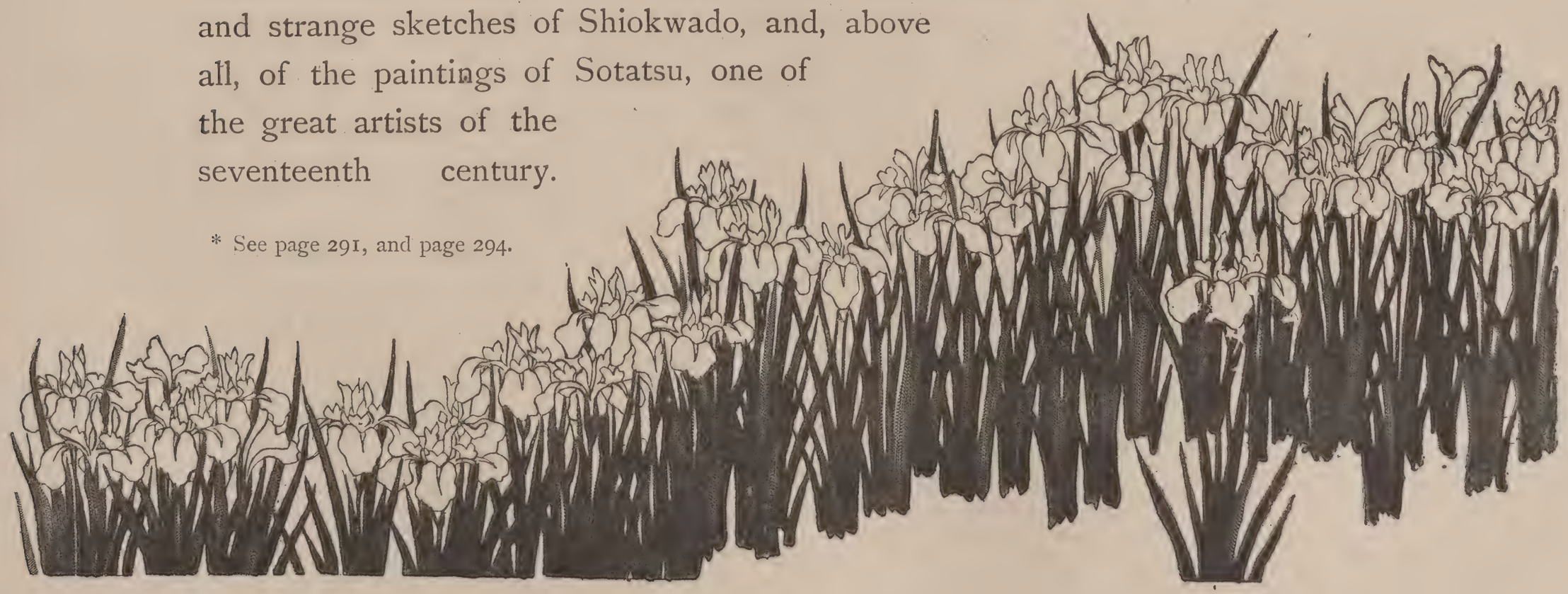
always like itself. There is no artist more originally or more profoundly Japanese. His works are known in Europe, and appreciated only by a small number of the initiated. I have therefore thought it would be interesting here to speak of an artist who is held by his countrymen to be one of the greatest, to bring into relief a decorative master whose influence has been considerable for two centuries, and who has pushed to their extreme conclusions the two fundamental principles of Japanese æstheticism, synthesis of forms, and simplification of subjects.

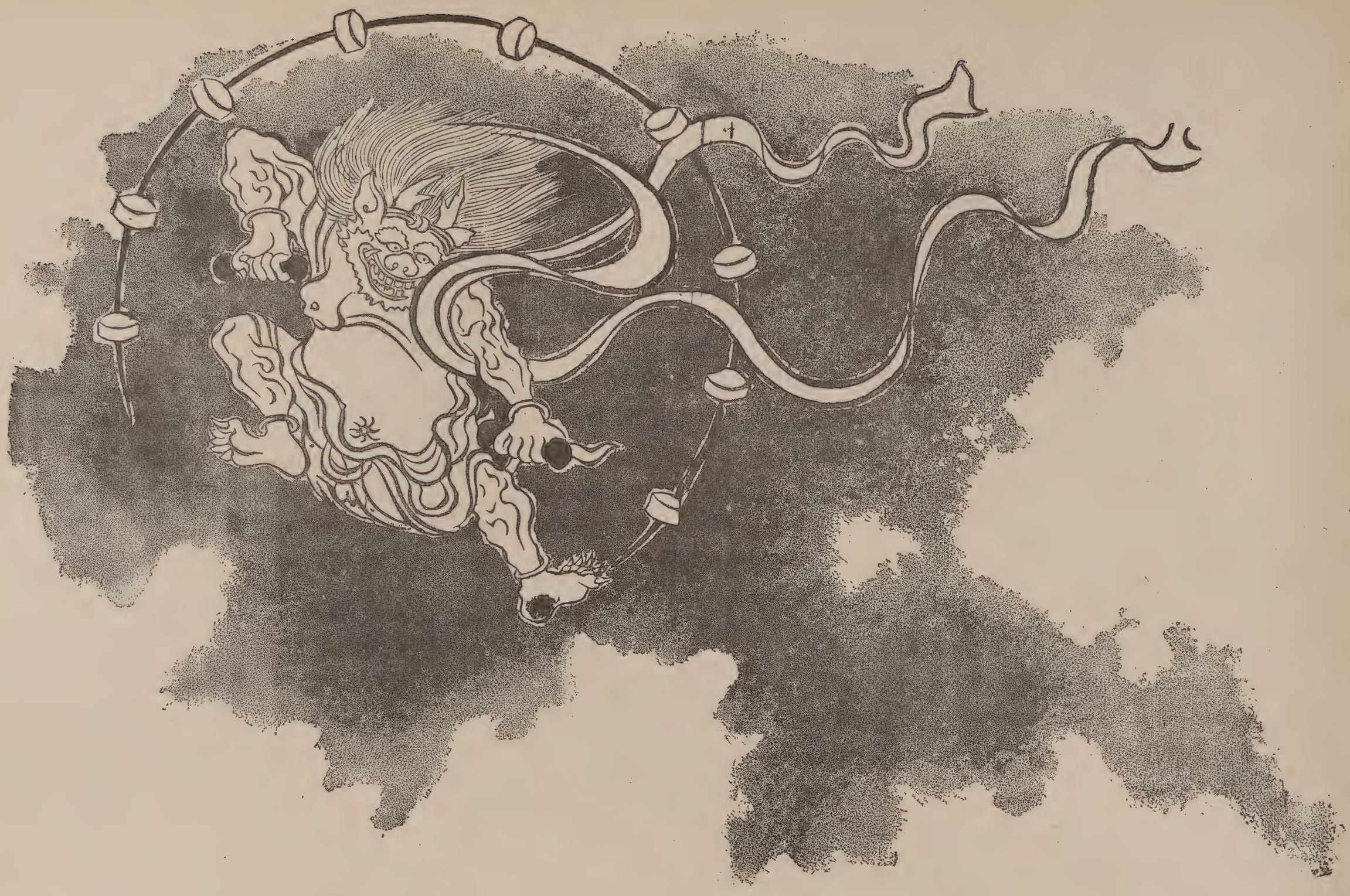
Unfortunately, with Korin as with all Japanese artists, biographic materials exist only in distressing meagreness. We should like to know the daily habits, the character, the physiognomy, the tastes, the state of mind of those who have exhibited such masterly brilliancy, such a rare invention in the creations which charm us; we should be glad to reconstruct the physical and moral portrait of the artists we prefer. We have scarcely five or six details of the private life of one of the most celebrated of all, Hokusai, so little removed from us that some of his contemporaries are still alive. With the Japanese the artist is impersonal, one who exists and survives only in his works. The historical curiosity of Europeans is lacking here.

Ogata Korin belongs to that incomparable period in the history of Japanese art known as the Genrokou period, 1688–1704. He is, together with Moronobu and Ittsho, the most striking illustration, the highest expression of it. We must retain and associate these three names, while adding that of Kenzan, the original ceramist, and of Ritsuo, the surprising lacquerer; illustrious names which stand out from this great era as from ground which has been fertilised by ten centuries of tillage. With people of taste, the Genrokou *nengo* marks the highest point of perfection which has been reached. In Japan the Genrokou period is spoken of in the same way as we say the Age of Louis XIV. It was then that the ancient city Kioto attained its highest celebrity as the moment when Yeddo, the city of the Shoguns, the new capital, saw its star in the ascendant and asserted its preponderance.

Korin was born at Kioto in 1661, of a good civic family named Ogata. He was early destined for the study of painting, but writers do not agree as to the origin of his artistic education. The imperial school of Tosa claims him as a pupil of Sumiyoshi Hirodzumi; the Wakan Sogwa Shiuran ascribes it to the two Kanos Yassunobu and Tsunenobu, whilst other authorities say it was due to a master who was at once, like Korin himself, a painter and lacquerer, Iman Honnami Koetsu. For my part, I should say that the sources of the talent of Korin are complex, and that the different statements may be reconciled. In submitting his works to an attentive examination, I find in effect, traces of various influences under an apparent unity of style. His manner is a subtle composite, a clever combination. To the school of Tosa is due his aristocratic refinement, his taste for water colour and transparent tints. Some of his paintings, certain of his paintings, where bright colours, strong greens, intense blues, polished whites, &c. prevail, as in the admirable kakémono in the British Museum, "the poet Narihira on the banks of the river Tanagawa" seem direct descendants of the sumptuous and heroic miniature of Tosa. From the Kanos he derives the rapidity, decision, and force in the stroke of the brush. He rivals the cleverest handlers of Indian ink, and paints, upon occasions, in the classic style, a masterpiece like this Shoki in a Parisian collection—such as these crows *en silhouette*, borrowed from the Gwashi Kwaiyo, or this sketch of the "Little Chicken," of which we here give reproductions.* My opinion is, that Korin commenced his apprenticeship in the Kano school. He assuredly had in mind the great gallery of chrysanthemums of Tsunenobu at Kioto, when he painted his beautiful screens, decorated with monumental flowers. Then he entered one of the studios of Tosa, very probably that of Honnami Koetsu, where he learned the principles of lacquering. But his own peculiar manner must be traced to a study of the old-fashioned and strange sketches of Shiokwado, and, above all, of the paintings of Sotatsu, one of the great artists of the seventeenth century.

* See page 291, and page 294.





As a painter, Korin is, to my mind, the immediate offspring of Sotatsu; he has from him, among other qualities, the light touch laid out on a large scale, and, which is a characteristic detail, almost always thrown up by touches of gold. I regard Sotatsu as the most remarkable pupil of Kano Yassunobu. He is no doubt the link which unites Korin to the studio of the latter.

Like his brother Kensan, like Motonobu, like Ittsho, like all the great artists of that time, Korin came to Yeddo, attracted by the fame of the Tokugawa. Certainly he produced at Yeddo his most remarkable works, whether in painting or lacquer. The presence of Fuji, and the style of the landscapes in his grand manner, suffice to show a long stay in the city. He returned, however, to Kioto, where he died in 1716, at the age of fifty-six.

Korin had several professional names, among which the best known is Hotshiku, which he used during the later period of his life, and chiefly on his works in lacquer. With this name he has signed admirable works of art, of genial invention and freest touch. We reproduce here the two signatures in their most usual form.*

Korin left numerous pupils, chiefly in lacquer. His studio, strongly equipped, lasted till the middle of this century. The pupil who best

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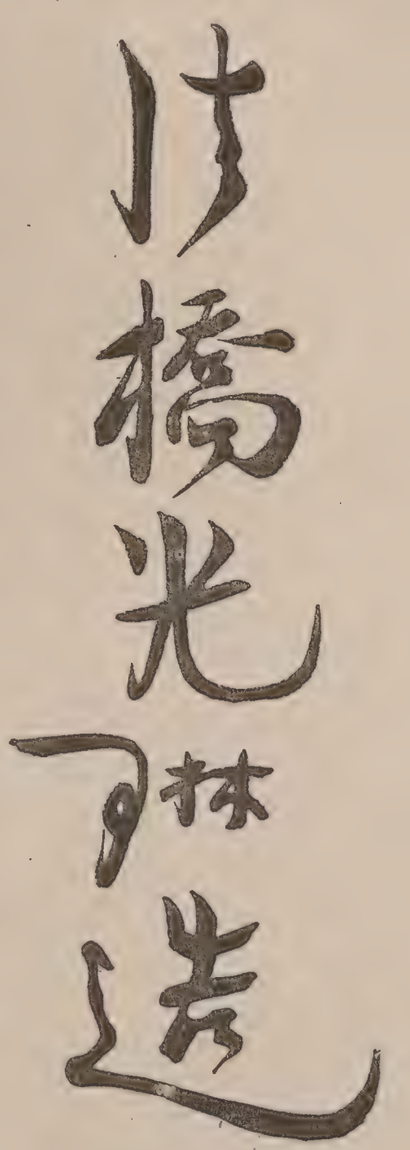
* See pages 287, 291.

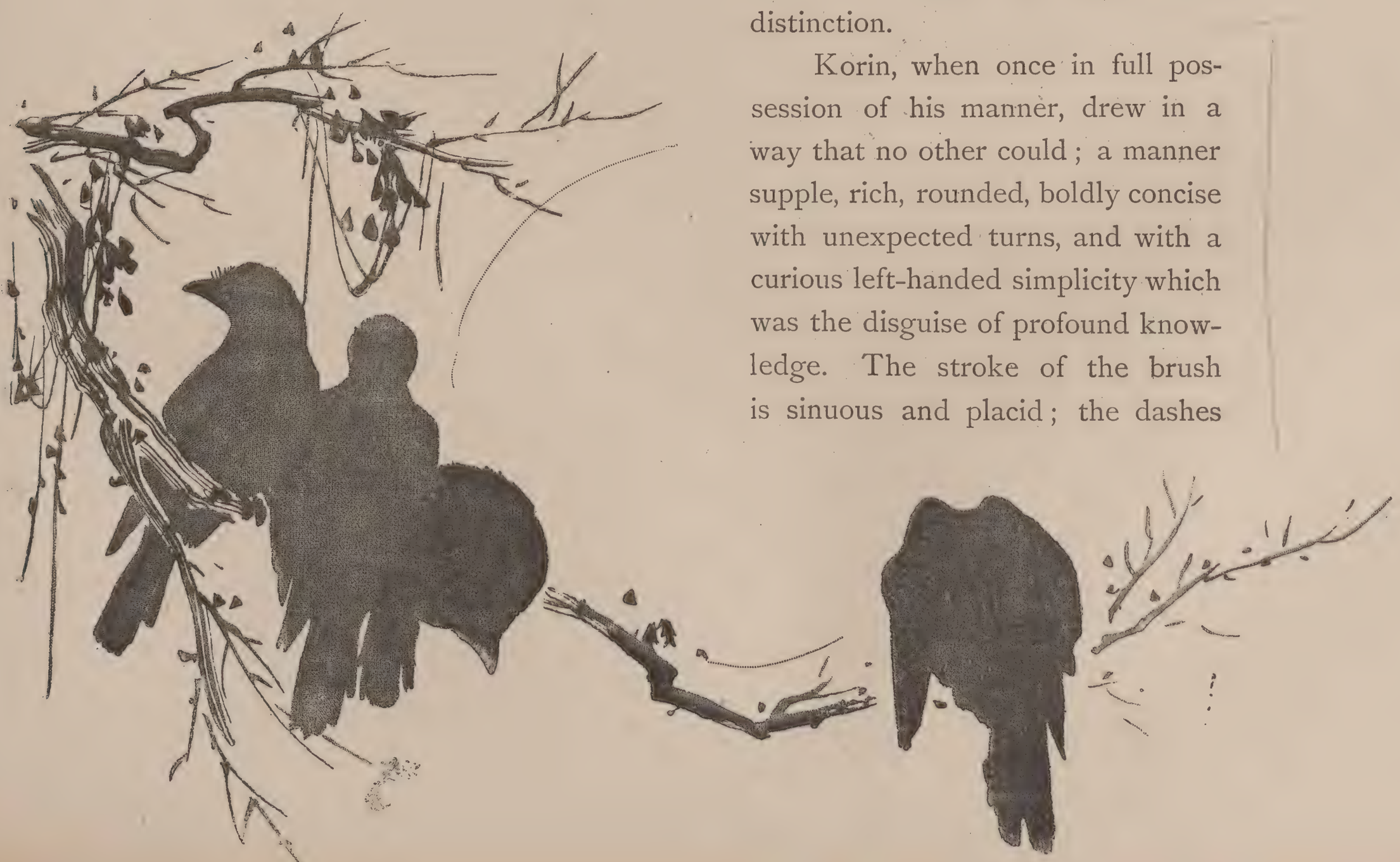
assimilated his style is without doubt Hoitsu; but the eminent of all was his brother Kenzan. There was such a relationship of genius between these twin brothers of art that one is often liable to confound their works. They seem almost double manifestations of a single entity. The style of Kenzan is an emanation from that of Korin. The paintings of these two masters have the same characteristic qualities. The style of Kenzan is more massive and more generous as becomes a painter habituated to the brush of the ceramist: Kenzan is one of the greatest artists of Japan. In some respects we like him better than Korin, he is more elegant, more feminine, and when he does make a dash he is irresistible. An authenticated piece of pottery by Kenzan is always regarded by the *virtuoso* as equal to a piece of lacquer by Korin.



Hô-kio Kô-rin fecit.
(Hôkio is a title.)

Hoitsu's paintings are wanting in solidity beside the virile robustness of Korin, but they possess a grace and a charm which betray the son of a daimio. The studio of Korin was about to be closed, when Hoitsu, taking it on his own account, restored some of its ancient lustre under the name "New School of Korin."

Authenticated works of Korin are no longer discoverable. Equally sought in Japan, Europe, and America, they fetch very high prices. All amateurs, even such as have not fully sounded this strange personality—and it is not to be sounded without long acquaintance—bow before its high and aristocratic distinction.



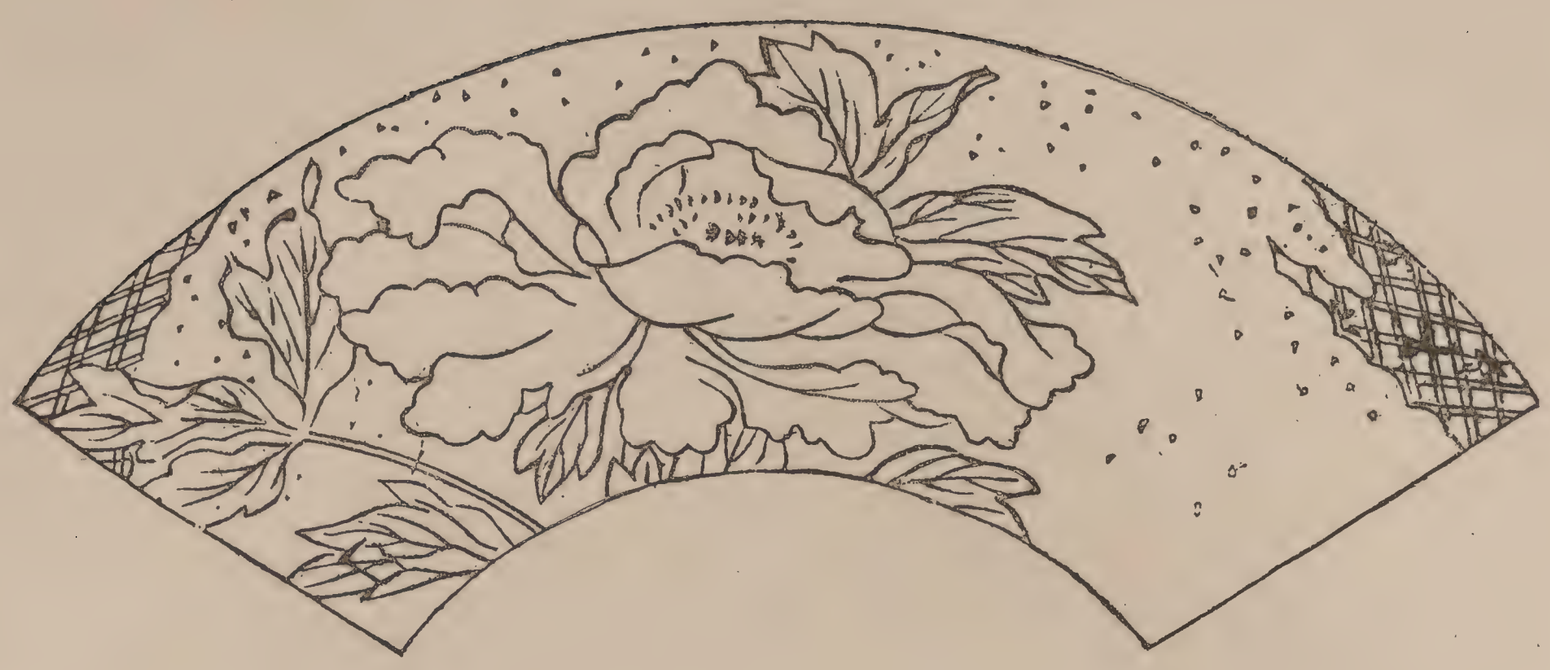
Korin, when once in full possession of his manner, drew in a way that no other could; a manner supple, rich, rounded, boldly concise with unexpected turns, and with a curious left-handed simplicity which was the disguise of profound knowledge. The stroke of the brush is sinuous and placid; the dashes

are of infinite gentleness; it keeps clear of jostling, angles, of all which can shock the eye. It is indeed the hand of a lacquerer which calmly traverses the silk or the paper. The colour is blended, smooth, harmonious, and as original in its combinations as in the design. I have said elsewhere, and repeat it, there is in this simplicity pursued to its farthest limits, a penetrating charm, an intellectual emanation, insidious, inexpressible, a perfection of rhythm which winds about one like voluptuous music. Beneath an almost infantine appearance is revealed a marvellous knowledge of form, a sureness of composition which no one has possessed to the same degree in Japanese art, and which is especially favourable to the combinations of ornamental art.

Korin has painted hand screens, fans, kakémonos; but he excelled above all in the painting of screens. No artist has, like him, worked out imposing subjects, and made blades of iris, of the peony, of chrysanthemums or poppy to sing, as it were, to warm and vibrating harmonies. All is combined with consummate art; a fine taste presides over the smallest details. Korin is a true Tshajin, an accomplished dilettante in an era of supreme refinement. His talent is universal; associated with that of his brother, it embraces the cycle of the decorative arts.

For those who comprehend their intense originality, his kakémonos are an unequalled treat. I know of a group of willows in a collection at Paris—where Korin is held in high honour—which is little short of miraculous.

But Korin's paintings pale before his lacquers. This great master has carried into the decoration and the execution of lacquers, all his spirit of initiative, all his independence of fancy. His action upon this branch of art has been all-powerful; his novel methods or at least his novelty of application—for everything had been indicated by his predecessors—revolu-



tionised the art of lacquering. Koetsu appears to have taught him the technicalities of his art. In this school he acquired his large style, juicy stroke of the brush, and strong relief. But it was in studying the earlier masters of the school of Kamakura, whose works he eagerly collected, that he found the models for the incrustations of mother-of-pearl and of tin which he so strikingly turned to account. I have at the moment in my possession two pieces from Korin's collection. They are of rare interest and of extraordinary beauty. One is a little box of cylindrical shape, with flat lid, in plain dull gold lacquer deep in tone, decorated with grains and flowers, obtained by slight relief in gold lacquer and incrustations of tin of the most exquisite delicacy. This box is of the fourteenth century. It offers a finished example of the decorative style of the Tosa school at its meridian, and shows us the state of design at that epoch, just as well as a kakémono. Korin has restored it with the greatest care, adding, at the bottom, a signature in silver lacquer.

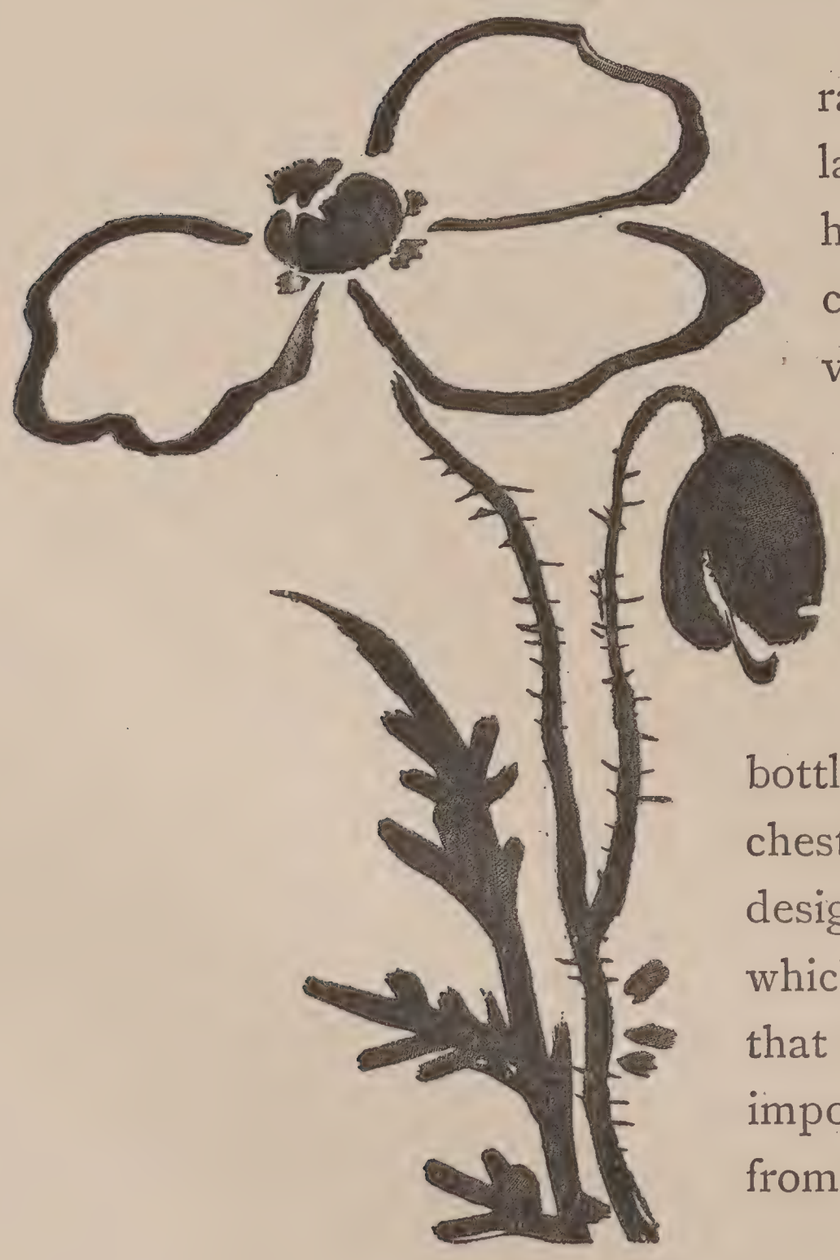
The other piece is an oblong inkstand in black lacquer, set in tin and decorated by a flight of dragon-flies, whose wings project a thousand reflections which play about it. Korin has taken the pains to make a restoration off-hand. This design, the size of the original, is to be found in the vast collection of lacquer designs formed by his pupils, then enriched by Hoitsu, and after all possessed by Yoyusai. A part of this collection is now the property of Mr. Charles Haviland.

Korin brings to the execution of lacquer methods so peculiar to himself, so original, such an independence of style, such geniality of design, that his works defy comparison, and, I had almost said, all description. Words are totally incapable of rendering sensations of this refined order. One must have held in one's hands a lacquer of Korin, tenderly handled it, and made it pass under the light in order to comprehend the fascination of it.

His fine lacquers seem worked out of a block of gold, the tone even, low, powerful, with spaces full of vibration and

warmth. It is a quite peculiar tone. They still say "Korin's gold," in order to denote his tone, which is like no other. Varnish flows from his brush as from a rich and abundant reservoir. His decoration, like his painting, is executed in great masses, with deliberate combinations of exceeding boldness. He gets surprising effects out of incrustations of mother-of-pearl, or of silver, or of tin. With tin employed as a grey note on small surfaces or in higher relief, he assists himself to expedients of design and depth, which give his lacquers the effect of a painting.

Several perfect specimens have reached Paris. The collection of Mr. Gillot shows us two or three large typical pieces, especially a writing-box decorated with a carrier of wood, Mr. de Goncourt is proud of a beautiful box with chrysanthemums, Mr. Ph. Burty of his *inrôs*, Mr. S. Bing is the fortunate owner of another writing-box, decorated with bamboos in incrustations of tin, and a superb panel decorated with an iris in relief. I have a few of my own, which I account the most precious treasures of my collection.



In order to appreciate to its full extent the decorative genius of Korin, we have better still than his lacquers or his paintings which are guarded by jealous hands; we have engraved representations of his most characteristic works. They form the contents of twelve volumes, and constitute what is called the "Works of Korin."

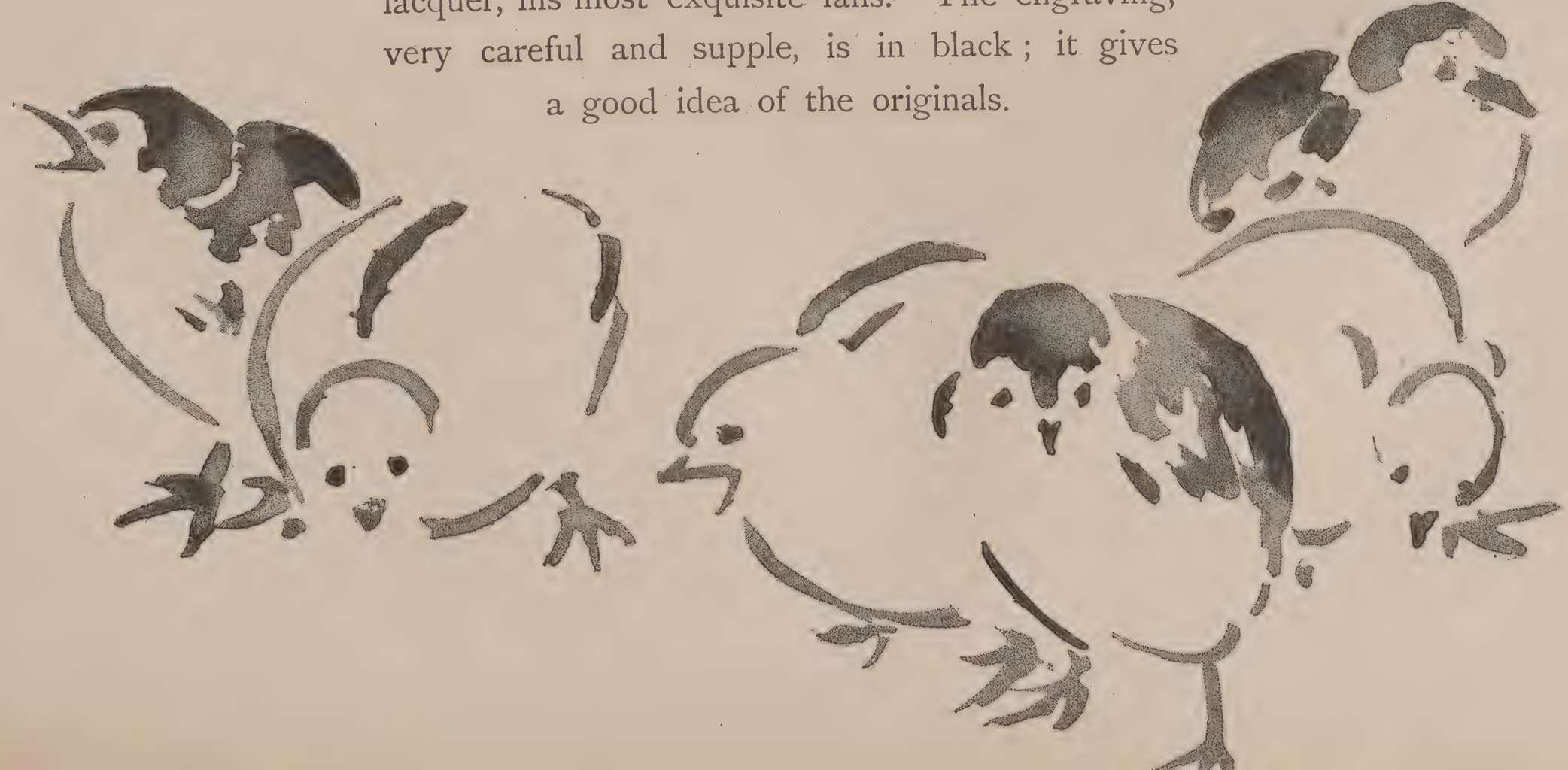
First there are the five volumes of the *Makiye Daizen*, published in 1759 by a lacquerer of the house Harokawa Hosei of Kioto. Among several hundred pieces of lacquer, inkstands, tea-trays, bottle cases, combs, medicine chests, perfume, we find the designs of works by Korin, which lead to the supposition that the master worked for this important house on his return from Yeddo.

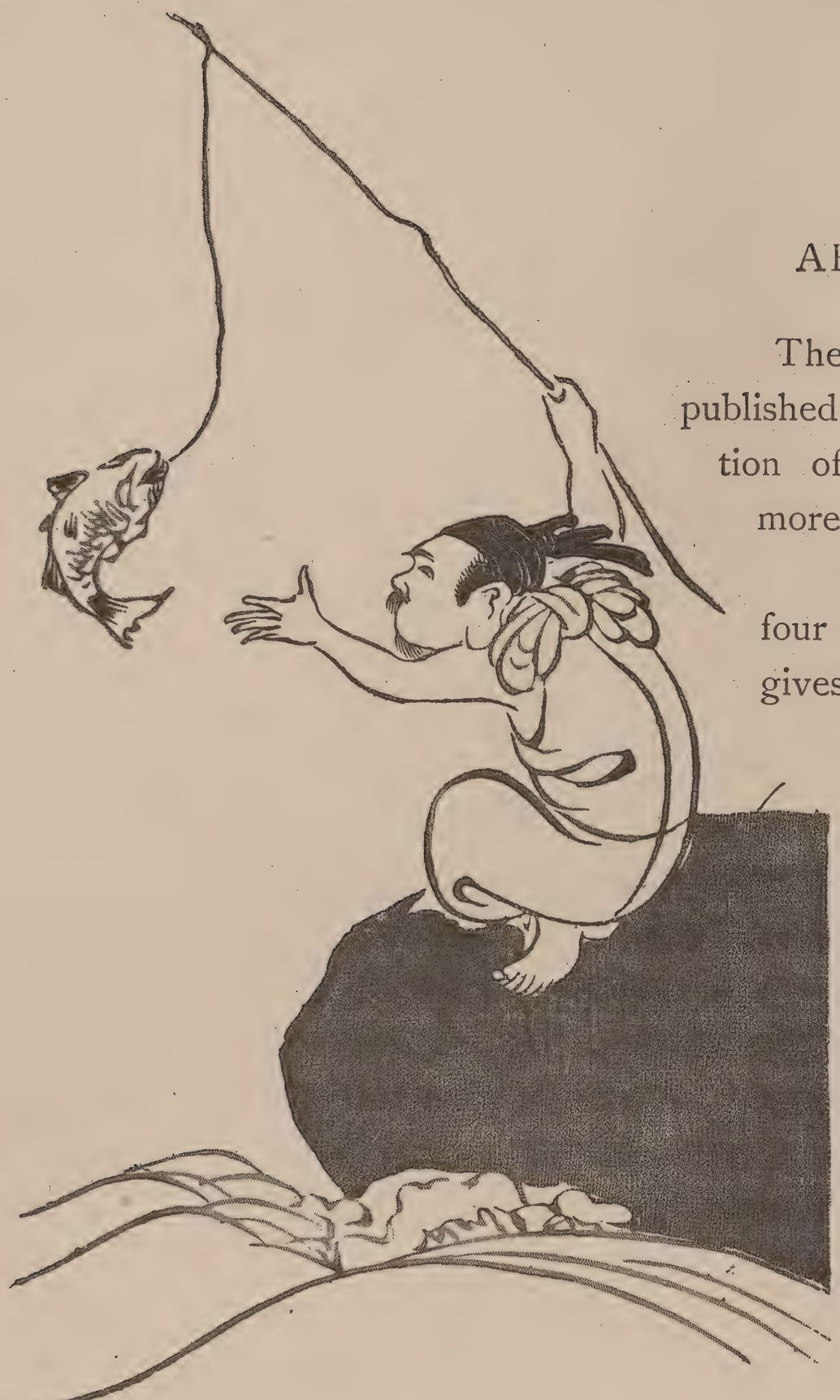
Then there are the two admirable volumes of the *Korin Gwafou*, whose extreme rarity is notorious to Japanese bibliographers. Mr. W. Anderson, generally so well informed, does not cite this. They comprehend twenty-six large plates and flowers, animals, human figures copied by an artist named Yoshinaka, and engraved in colours (Yeddo, 1801). There are in it compositions of such a character that you cannot forget them, and of an extravagance in style, which are, if I might so say, Korin in a state of exasperation—comic inventions, magic in their "go," which leave far behind them the riotous fancy of a Toba or of a Mitsonobu, airy flights of design, which have their parallel in no Japanese work.

The *Korin Gwashiki*, in one volume (Osaka, 1818), is not less remarkable, nor less rare in kind. It offers thirty sketches, which assuredly are among the finest of the artist's work. Ikava, the engraver, has rendered them with incomparable fidelity. If it were not for the marks of the wood block which show here and there slightly in the paper, we might persuade ourselves that we were looking on the originals themselves, with all the delicate touches of the pencil, and the scarce perceptible gradations of colours, which fade into the grey. The *Korin Gwashiki* is one of the masterpieces of Japanese publication.

The little *Korin Man-gwa*, engraved at Yeddo, and published at Nagoya, by Yerakuya, Hokusai's publisher, is also charming and most rare. It consists of sketches of plants in black and white, delicate and elegant, with all the antique air, the ease and the richness which Korin put into his lacquer decorations. The reverse is signed with the two united names, Ogata Korin and Hotshiku. The work, prepared by Korin, appears to have been engraved only for this edition.

The *Korin Shinsen Yakudzu*, in two volumes, published at Yedo (1815), and engraved by Shimidzu Riuzo, is a collection of the great works of Korin, in painting and lacquer. There we find his most magnificent screens, his most famous kakémonos, his most precious boxes in lacquer, his most exquisite fans. The engraving, very careful and supple, is in black; it gives a good idea of the originals.





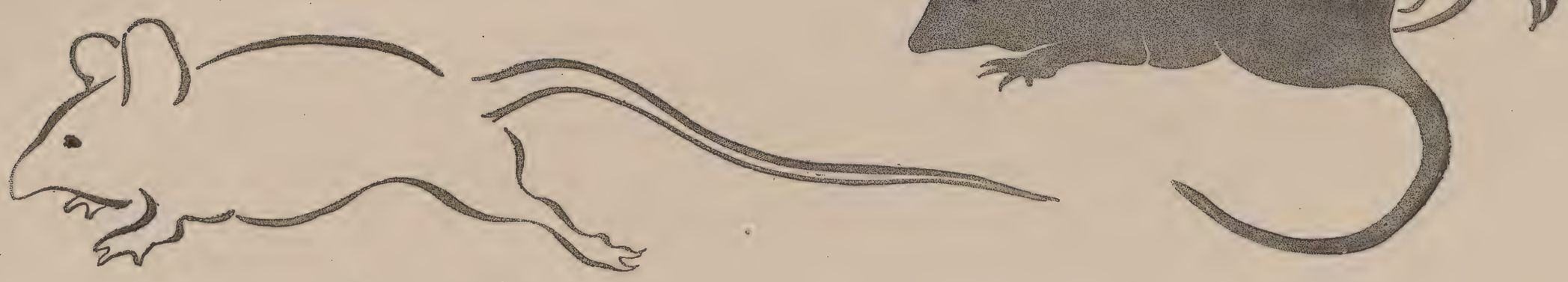
The four volumes of the *Korin Yakudzu*, were published by the Academy of Korin, under the direction of Hoitsu, in two series.* Its engraving is more dry, the impressions less perfect.

These six volumes, containing no less than four hundred designs, is a veritable repertory. It gives an idea of the inexhaustible versatility of the great artist, and yet certainly all of his works are not there, Hoitsu having only reproduced those which he had at hand.

Finally, we find a certain number of Korin's compositions in contemporary collections, particularly in the *Gwashi Kwaiyo*, and in the *Yehon Te Kagami*, published by Shunboku in 1707, and 1720. From this collection we obtained the crows standing out black on the moon's disc, that genial and striking conception which combines the power of the Kanos with the expressive power of the style of Korin.

* First series published at Kioto, in the *Bunkwa* period, from 1804 to 1817; second series published during the *Bounsei* period, from 1818 to 1829, and beautifully engraved, by the same Shimidzou Riouzo, with a preface by Bountshio. These were reprinted in 1864.

LOUIS GONSE.



NOTE.—All the Illustrations of this Part are by Korin.

DESCRIPTION OF PLATES.

Plate BBH reproduces a Kakémono painted by Korin.

This fierce-looking personage is Shoki, who, according to tradition, is perpetually occupied in chasing imps. The beneficent work of the antique hero is a favourite theme with Japanese artists; painters, sculptors, lacquerers, ceramic artists, interpret it in a hundred ways. Indeed, owing to the joyous temperament we know so well, they have come to depart from the respect due to supernatural beings, and have not hesitated at depicting or modelling the numerous mischances which befall the brave protector in his legendary task. Thus we understand how the story of Shoki has become complicated by a very strong infusion of the comic, and the animated variations of the ceaseless strife between the demi-god and the hobgoblins.

Shoki, always fierce, pursues his work of extermination in the tragic vein, while the alert little tribe of imps harasses and teases him in a thousand different ways, and often escapes him.

Here the terrible warrior, with great beard, the legendary cap with the two antennæ on his head, searches the space about him with his eye. His sword is already drawn, ready to strike. He seeks his victim, who is very likely hidden in some inaccessible corner and defies his anger. Korin gives this attitude with incomparable spirit, with a frankness of execution and a boldness of touch for a description of which we must refer to the essay of Mr. Gonse in this part.

The signature of this kakémono comprises four letters, of which the two first signify Hokio, a title of honour bestowed on great artists, and the two last, Korin.

The border is a facsimile of the material which frames the original. We know that the kakémono (that which is hung on the wall*) is the picture of the Japanese. Frame and glass are unknown. The kakémonos have, indeed, preserved to us some of the most curious specimens of ancient materials. This one presents, on a ground of ochre, designs in silver blackened by time. The mounting is evidently of the same date as the picture. This is not always the case, for many a kakémono has been mounted several times.

The original is twice the size of our reproduction. In order to avoid an undue reduction of the figure, we have refrained from rendering all the stuff, which gives a greater length to the kakémono above and below. In the same way the cord for hanging, and the stick with ivory at each end for rolling the kakémono, have been necessarily omitted.

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* See Vol. I., page 150.

Plate BCH is another reproduction of Korin, derived from the *Korin Gwashiki*, a very rare book, quoted at page 295 of this part. Some readers, no doubt, will be disturbed by the extravagance of composition pointed to by Mr. Gonse. We must explain that these are young dogs, whose rounded forms we are acquainted with, and refer the reader to the description of the Japanese dog which Mr. Renan gives in the preceding part, page 280. This animal is often a veritable ball, and the artist has taken pleasure in throwing this extreme roundness into relief by tracing with one circular stroke of the brush the outrageously fat bodies of the puppies. What fidelity there is in the slumber of the one which closes its eyes, the head resting on the back of its accommodating companion!

Plate AGJ reproduces a painting of a pupil of Sesshin, named Sesson, nearest to the master in talent, and the one who has attained the greatest renown. He flourished towards the end of the fifteenth century. Comparing the remote date with the kind of subject, we see that the Japanese have from the beginning based their art on observation of nature, and that that is no modern innovation. Those geese at the edge of a marsh are striking for their robustness and life; but what our reproduction cannot vie with is the vaporous transparence of a background of mist, which, instead of the compact mass on our plate, seems to part on either hand to disclose the landscape.

These authentic works of grand epochs have rarely found their way to Europe, and it is to be feared that the number of them does not increase. Certain of the Japanese are beginning to regret that in the feverish impulse towards the practical and material sides of western civilization they have suffered many of their classical works to be taken away. They recover themselves, and their pride in the glorious past reawakens. Sometimes even they seek to repurchase *chefs-d'œuvre* which they had inconsiderately parted with.

We intentionally place plate BAF close to that which precedes it, so as to permit of comparison between the interpretation of the same class of subjects with three centures of time between. This goose is taken from a work of Morikouni in 3 vols. (eighteenth century), which reproduces by engraving originals executed by the brush. The fidelity with which the strokes of Indian ink are imitated is such that a very practised eye is needed to discern that we have before us printed work in place of a drawing executed by the hand.

The bird appears in its powerful flight, with its neck stretched out and its short tail expanded, like an arrow shot by the bow of its extended wings. Already at that time the almost imperceptible movements of the bird were patent to the artists; these fugitive attitudes, which seemed to us improbable not so long ago, are now verified by instantaneous photography, which retains them.

Plate BED is a coloured print of Hiroshigé. We have seen how fond the Japanese were of representations of beautiful spots in their country. All the great highways of the empire were traversed by certain artists; each of these furnished a large contingent towards the

formation of vast panoramas breathing with life and animated by colour. Hiroshigé gave himself to this pursuit in the ardour of a lover. Several of his contemporaries devoted themselves to scene-painting, others made feminine beauty the goal of their art. He concentrated all his ardour to the delineation of nature. No one has better caught a "bit" of landscape in its most suggestive aspect, or varied the aspect according to the time of day or the kind of weather; at one time bathed in the glory of the setting sun or silvered by the poetic brilliance of an autumn moon.

Now it is a view in the centre of the capital (see page 186, Part XV.), now the margin of a lake (plate A, Part I.), now a scene taken from To-Kaido, the most frequented of Japanese roads, such as that in Part XV., plate AHI. To-day we find ourselves transported to the Kiso-Kaido which unites the two capitals, the ancient and the modern Kioto and Yeddo. The place represented in this engraving is called Sembo, one of the sixty-nine stations on the way. The sun, about to sink below the horizon, already clothes in roseate tints the light boughs and strong silhouettes of the willows which incline over the river where the boatmen are punting,

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Plate BAJ is an engraving of Okoumoura Massanobou, who flourished in 1700. He was among the first artists who produced prints and introduced colour-printing. At this primitive stage colour-printing was restricted to using two colours, pale green and faded rose, an association replete with softness and charm. This is in lively contrast with the first plates produced, of which the black only was printed, all the other parts of the engraving, especially details of dress, being illuminated by the brush with great vigour of tone. This kind was generally polished off with lacquer and gold powder, which gave the whole a very composite look.

On this page we see a young man, evidently an aristocrat, as we see by the dignity of his carriage and the distinction of his attire as well as by his lordly occupation, for falconry was in Japan as elsewhere a privilege of rank. This personage carries a glove, an accessory of the toilet not often seen in Japanese engravings. A glove is only used in Japan to protect the hand while carrying a bird of prey.

Plate BCE is a representation, after Tsho Kwan (fifteenth century), of two birds of prey used for the chase; one of them reposes on his perch, the other is hard at work holding in its claws an unfortunate wader.

Plate BDF presents a subject of decoration formed of interlaced branches, and Plate ADF flowers and leaves curiously wreathed into the shape of butterflies.

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DESCRIPTION OF PLATES 298

SEPARATE PLATES.

BED. **Landscape.** By Hiroshigé.

BCH. **Puppies.** By Korin.

BDF. **Industrial Model.** Branches in Bloom.

BBH. **Shoki.** A Kakémono. Double Plate. By Korin.

BAF. **Flying Goose.** By Morikuni.

BAJ. **Actor.** By Okumura Massanobu.

ADF. **Industrial Model.** Flowers wreathed into Shapes.

AGJ. **Geese in the Reeds.** Kakémono. By Sesson.

BCE. **Two Birds of Prey.** By Tsho Kwan.

The next No. will contain an "Essay on the Japanese Theatre," by Mr. A. Lequeux.

GRAV. IMP. PAR GILLOT.

芳月堂

奥村文角政信写

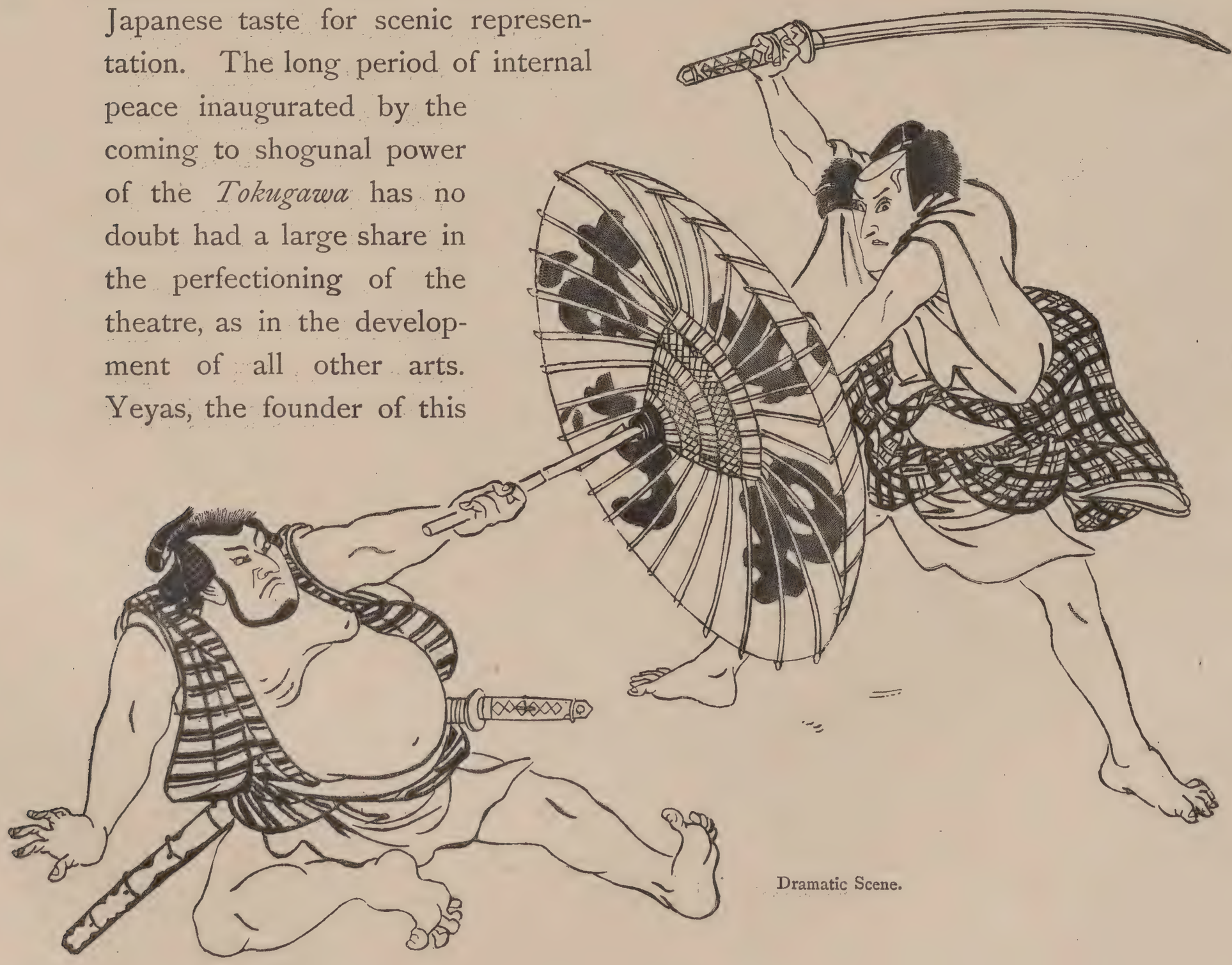
GRAV. IMP. PAR GILLOT.

GRAV. IMP. PAR GILLOT.

THE
THEATRE
IN
JAPAN

The Japanese theatre, Chinese in origin, when once transplanted, attained remarkable perfection. In this metamorphosis we are made to feel the influence of the taste and sentiment of a race whose life consists mainly in the enjoyment of the wonders of nature and in the pursuit of art.

The pedigree of French comedy is well known; how the comic element was introduced, while yet imperfect, from Italy with the Renaissance, and how it became transformed to the extent of becoming the theatre of Molière, while in its native country it remained almost in its primitive state until the advent of Goldoni, which was not till the end of the last century. China has never had and can never expect to have a Goldoni. We dare not affirm that Japan will have its Molière. In these countries of the far east little is said of reformers in the walk of art. Progress is rather the effect of many influences which are the characteristics of an epoch. Still it cannot be denied that Japan has passed through an era of dramatic reform, for after deriving its theatre from China, it has left China far behind; but this reformation has not been the work of a single man nor of one generation. It has come gradually as the logical consequence of the Japanese taste for scenic representation. The long period of internal peace inaugurated by the coming to shogunal power of the *Tokugawa* has no doubt had a large share in the perfectioning of the theatre, as in the development of all other arts. Yeyas, the founder of this

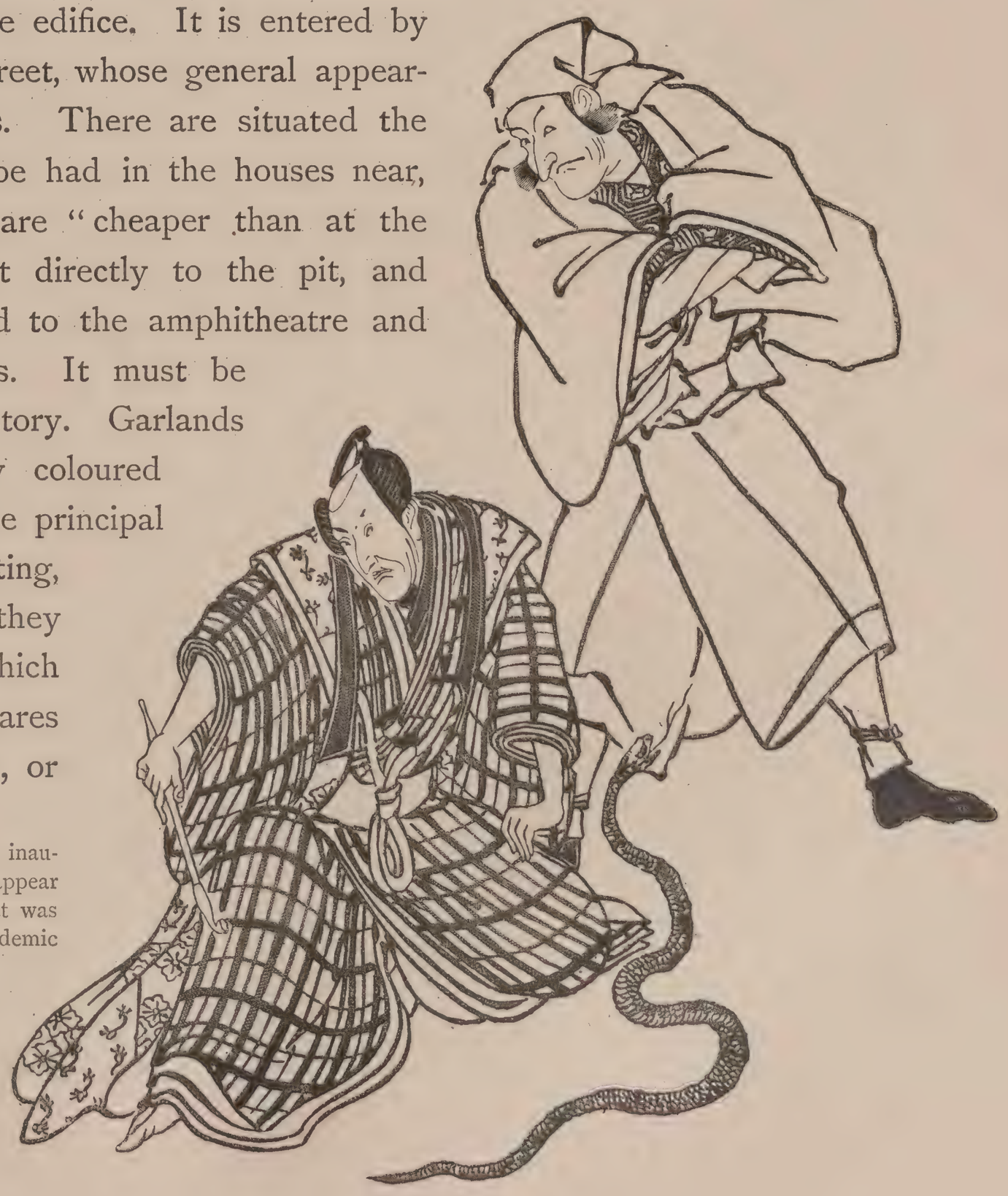


Dramatic Scene.

Shogun dynasty, may in some sort be considered the promoter of a Japanese Renaissance which coincides with our seventeenth century.

No doubt the principles and rules of Japanese dramatic art have many shortcomings, but such as it is, the kind being conceded, it has arrived at such a point of perfection that farther progress is not to be looked for without a change of style. It would cease to be the same art. This is perhaps what has preserved it hitherto from that movement of reform, which has for some years tended to deprive ancient Japan of its local colouring under the whitewash of new institutions and manners pretending to be European, but whose consequences have not yet been seriously regarded except by the Japanese themselves. The theatre has not yet been invaded by the black coat and white tie.* So that the amateur of local colouring whom business or pleasure brings to Japan cannot do better than seek it at the theatre. He will there find it in its most delicate and original shades. The auditorium and the stage compose between them a field of observation marvellously adapted as a study of manners and history.

The building is a great square edifice. It is entered by a vestibule on a level with the street, whose general appearance is that of our entrance halls. There are situated the box offices. Tickets are also to be had in the houses near, but we do not affirm that they are "cheaper than at the theatre." Two doors lead almost directly to the pit, and two staircases, ladders rather, lead to the amphitheatre and to the passages towards the boxes. It must be understood that there is but one story. Garlands of lanterns in the façade, highly coloured banners, a series of paintings of the principal scenes of the play in course of acting, all have a rather clamorous note; they are good puffs. The great space which we call the pit is divided into squares of equal size like a draughtboard, or



* We may add that, several months ago, at the inauguration of a great theatre at Tokio, the actors did appear on the scene in what we call evening dress. But that was only during the ceremony of opening, which had an academic character. The performance ensued without any innovation that could shock the spectator. Still, perhaps, there was a shade of transition.

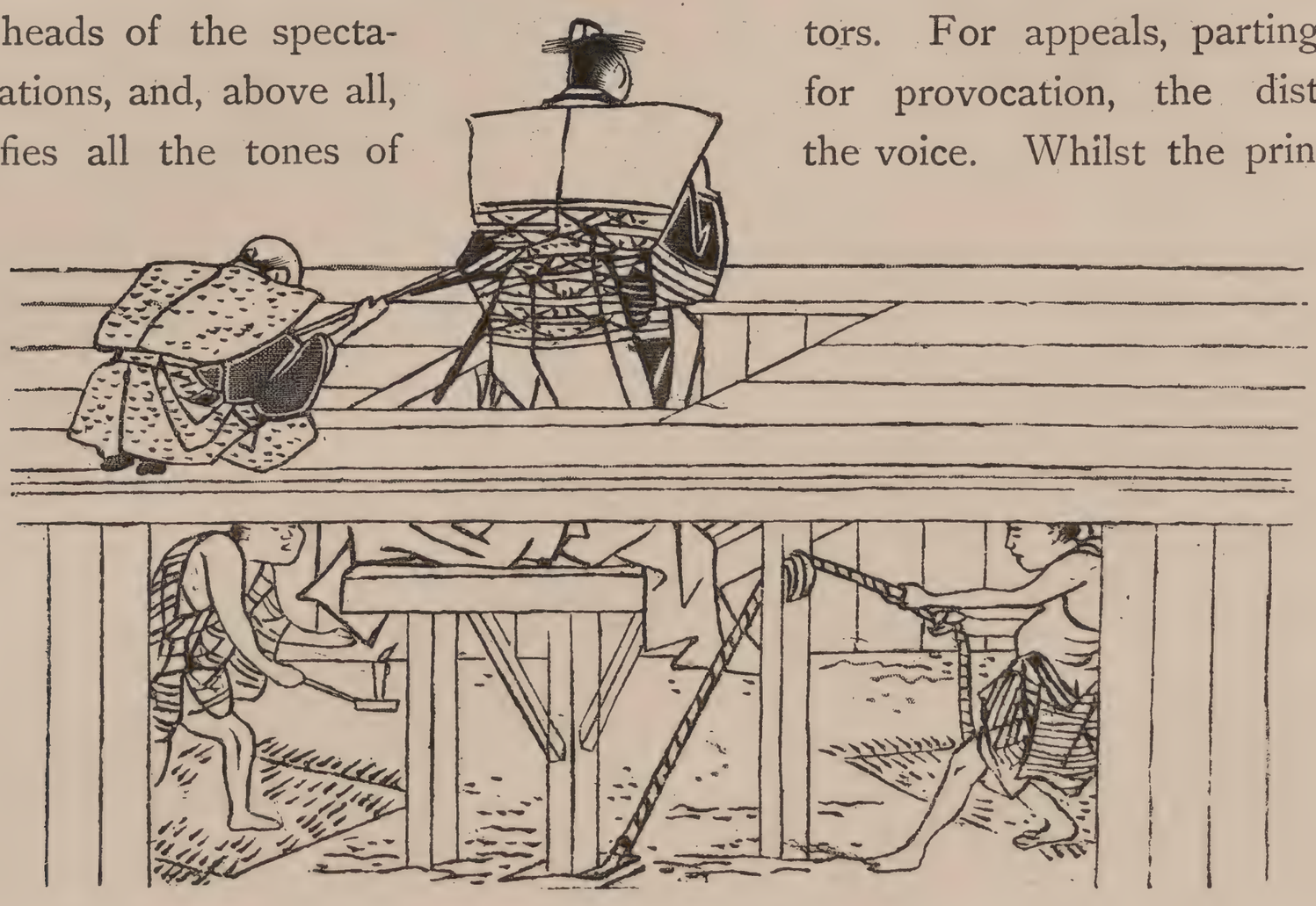
rather like a ceiling in compartments. These are boxes for four, but they are often made to hold six persons or even seven. The spectators step over the partitions to gain their places; consequently, when once a family is installed in its box—a very suitable name—it cannot very easily get out again. For all that, many of them are emptied at each interval between the acts, for the performances last ten hours or more. But people dine there as they would at home—smoke, nurse children, and are generally at their ease. There are no chairs, the Japanese mode of sitting being to

Actor's Dressing-Room, by Shunyei.

squat upon the heels, which position being the least tiring and the most convenient, can be retained throughout the day. Two boarded passages, raised above the boxes to about the level of the heads of the audience, whose heads alone are seen above the partitions, run from one end to the other of the auditorium right up to the stage. By these the public of the pit enters; by them also most of the actors during the representation make their exits or their entrances, especially when illusion demands their arrival from a distance, or when, in quitting the scene, they have to walk through streets or across country.

The doorkeeper has, in a fashion, the office of a call-boy. To this is added the care of a varied collection of umbrellas and parasols, which he opens and hands to each actor who enters, when the "business of the play" requires those accessories. This distribution goes on under the eyes of the

audience; often the dialogue commences in the rear of the public, directly the artist has set his foot inside the auditorium, and long before he gets to the level of the stage. Sometimes he stops midway to say something, or perhaps turns back, then goes in again, arriving at length at the desired moment. The drama gains much in life in this way, all the spectators participate in the action of the piece. We see what proportions the scenes assume when they thus invade the auditorium above the heads of the spectators. For appeals, parting exhortations, and, above all, for provocation, the distance justifies all the tones of the voice. Whilst the principal



The Trap-door.

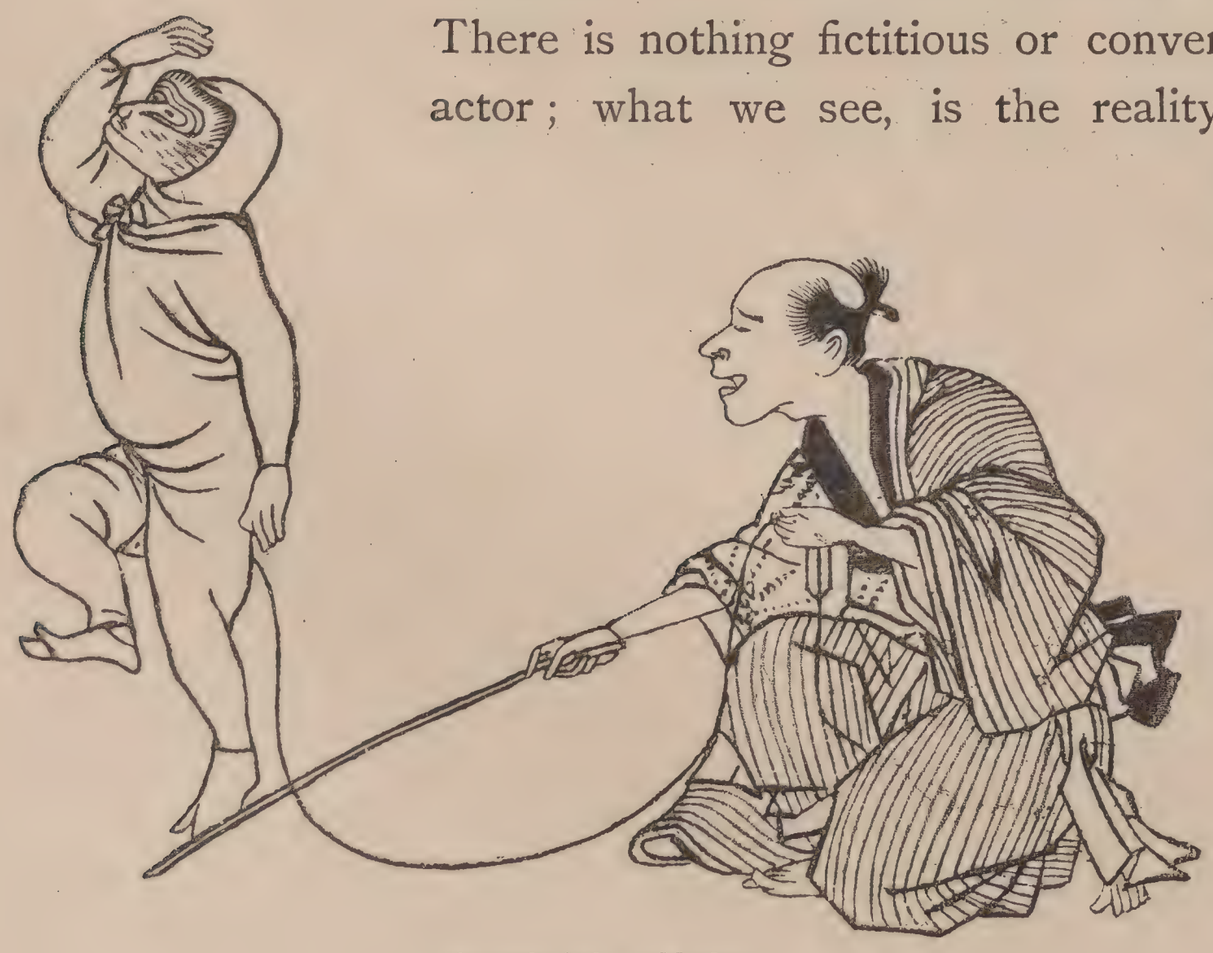
action unfolds itself before the public, accessory scenes can be simultaneously played at the sides of the auditorium, independent from the actors' point of view, but from the spectators' part and parcel of the events which compose the play. Often the principal action is transferred to the middle of the pit. In that way a triple enlargement of the area of the theatre is gained. This also allows the conspirators, the assassins, liberators, and other personages who have to concert before they can act, deliberately to lay down their plans, or their proposed stroke of business, before arriving at the spot where it is to be carried out. The want of space in our stages often brings about very improbable situations. Thus, for example, we may see an actor who does not know what to do with his hands while waiting for the assassins to have arranged how they shall cut his throat. Nothing of the kind need be apprehended in a Japanese theatre. But it is precisely

because this goes on above the heads of the audience that it is practicable. Everyone is in the thick of the drama, and probably is so much the more interested in it. For a spectator who gives the rein to his imagination the boarded passages may become rural roads and the pit a cultivated field; and if he would make his pleasure complete, he would annihilate himself as a man and make himself part of the play as an invisible spirit.

The Fox suggests to a simpleton whom he has arrayed in straw armour and bamboo sword, that he is a great Lord.

The mounting of the piece is astonishingly exact. If the action takes place in a house, it is represented entire with its approaches and neighbourhood. Moreover, Japanese architecture lends itself to this kind of decoration, for even palaces do not attain monumental proportions. In truth, when a house is completely open, little beyond the framework remains. We see everything that goes on inside; in this case, the theatre needs no illusion. If the scene is played in a closed house, it must be bisected. Still the Japanese give you the roof, the garden, the wall and the entrance gate, in one word all that immediately surrounds the house, all of the same cut.

There are changes of scene. The scenery with its decorations goes round upon a turn-table. This plan has the advantage occasionally of making the play seem more natural. Thus an actor having entered a house by the doorway, we presently see the interior of the house.* How well all this is conceived to make the audience live in the very midst of the action! There is nothing fictitious or conventional in the exit or the return of this actor; what we see, is the reality. It is desired to show the public in succession the front and the rear of a house. So the scene is turned round; what more simple, since the house in its entirety is there? The turn-table may contain three pictures, or, more strictly speaking, three theatres at once, so that



Actor depicting a Monkey.

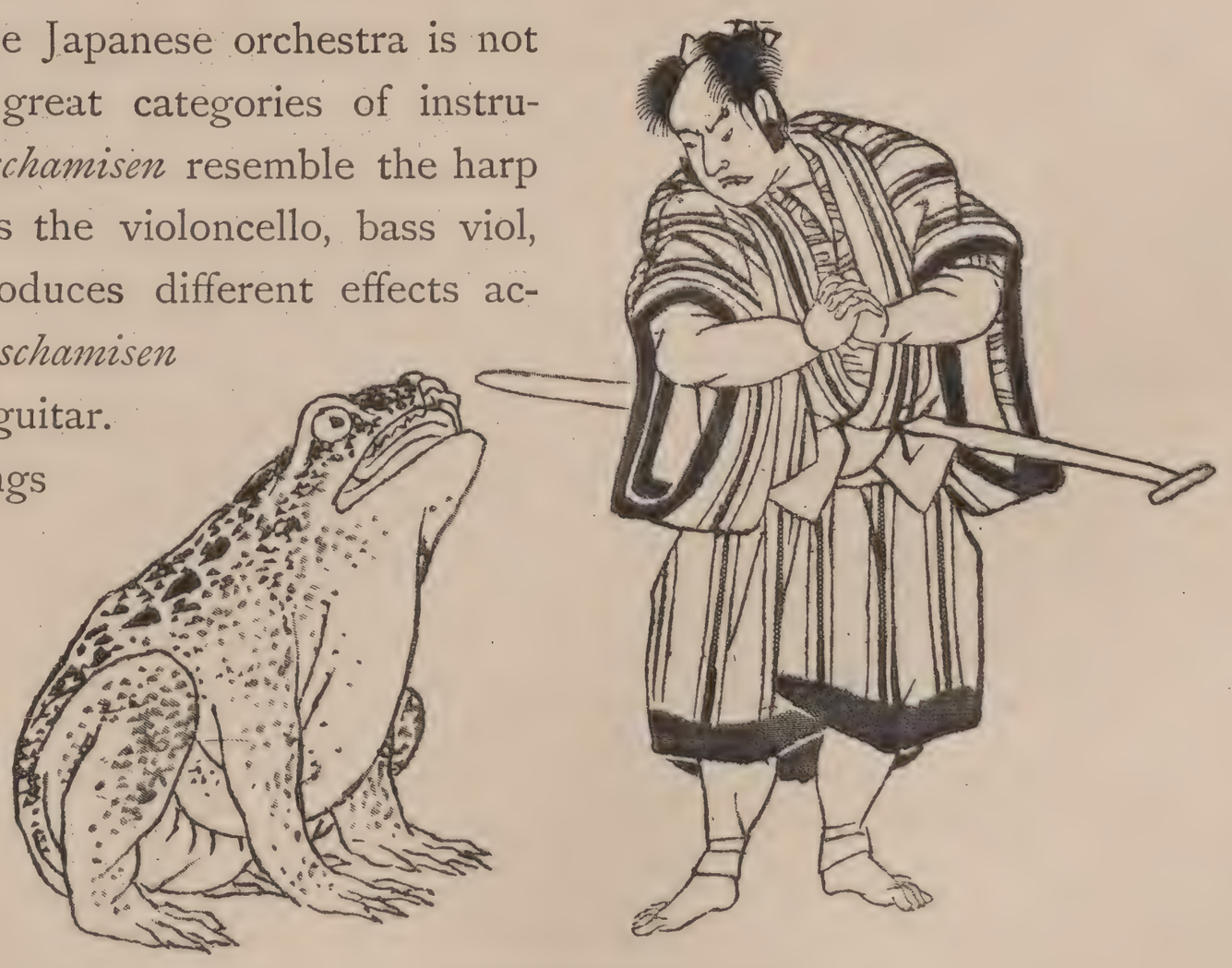
* One may even pass from one play to another in the interior of the same house.

two changes of scene may be made, one after the other. The area of the scene is much larger than the height of it.* Some accessory decorations are added at the sides; they are sometimes continued into the auditorium in the midst of the spectators. The curtain is drawn to one side. It is ornamented with some boldly drawn design and with a gigantic inscription.

The orchestra is concealed on the left, and is on a level with the stage, behind a decoration of open work, which varies according to the theatre of action. It plays almost without ceasing, accompanying the dialogue with a melody grave or gay, discreet or violent, low or noisy, accommodating itself to the situation. This melody is also made to represent the murmur of nature; it is imitative, and becomes by turns the zephyr, storm, tempest, thunder, rain, waterfall, running stream, the noise of a body which is thrown into the water and the rushing of the water which fills its place.

Japanese music is wholly in the minor key. Suffice it to say that it has no relation to our musical canons, and that the European ear needs time in order to become used to it, and still more to like it. Still, that comes about. A peculiarity of Japanese music is, that it is in some sort the counterpart of Chinese music, which, exclusively in the major key, is equally foreign to our notions of harmony. From this fact a curious and yet logical consequence has resulted, that European musicians have amused themselves by obtaining an extremely oriental extract from a combination of the two systems, which, with its fantastic belongings, could be rendered by our instruments.

In its main divisions the Japanese orchestra is not unlike ours. It has three great categories of instruments. The *koto* and the *schamisen* resemble the harp and the violin with its allies the violoncello, bass viol, &c. The *koto* likewise produces different effects according to its size. The *schamisen* has certain affinities to the guitar. Generally speaking, the strings of the *schamisen* and the



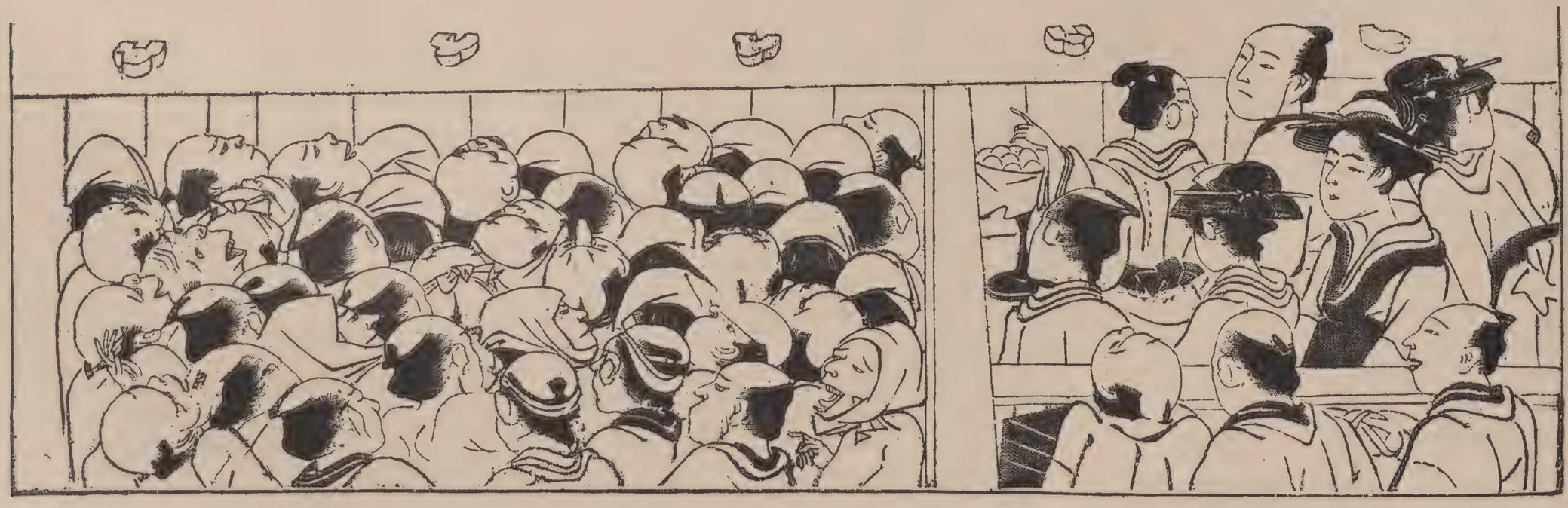
Huge Frog, played by an actor.

* Which does not prevent its holding a house. Japanese houses are generally of one story, called *nikai*. Latterly there have been houses of two stories built in Japan, but these are not introduced in theatres.

The Stage.

koto are touched with the finger; now and then use is made of a bow of which the strings are scarcely stretched. A kind of flute, of no particular shape, is the principal wind instrument. And there is a series of tambourines and kettledrums of quite an original aspect, which occupy a place much more important among musical instruments than do their congeners in the West.

The chorus is placed at the side opposite to the orchestra, in a small box closed by a blind. This is a personage who is not seen, but may often be heard. His functions are precisely those of the chorus in Greek tragedy; but he is of more importance, although concealed. He represents the good sense and morals of the people, but he chiefly explains the unfolding of the



The Pit.

drama. On occasions, he recounts what takes place outside the scene, and unveils the inner sentiments of the *dramatis personæ*. The Japanese drama, a reflection of actual things, often develops through entire scenes in mere pantomime. In real life people are not always talking, but action goes on incessantly, because we are alive. We may be said to act, whether it be for some definite end, whether we repose or think, or are kept motionless by fear, expectation, or fatigue. If we are asleep, we may not seem to act; and yet is not sleep an action *sui generis*, susceptible of many varieties which have their manifestations in dreams and visible signs according as we are agitated or calm, well or ill, happy or unhappy? In any case we exist during sleep, and the world moves about the sleeper, because of him, and in relation to him. Indeed, if we are dead, we still exist as a corpse, as a recollection, as something which has been, and are therefore not extinct in the life of men. The actions of human beings mutually re-act, they live after death. Directly or indirectly we are always in action. But we only speak now and then. In this respect the European theatre is removed from all probability. [Action with us is always associated with words, and if they are suspended to allow of the spectator's attention being concentrated on some capital point of action, that is only for a moment. In Japan, throughout whole scenes the actors may exchange but a few words; monologues are rare and always justi-

Horse as given on the Stage.

fied, which cannot be said of our dramas. Here it is that the use of the chorus is felt. He recites or chants the piece; he explains the pantomime which is going on before the public, his expressive voice takes suitable intonations—it is terrible or harmonious, it is generally solemn, and sometimes goes off into song. This mode of conducting a drama has caused Japanese actors to be the best mimics in the world. In this art they have attained a surprising perfection, thanks to which the Japanese theatre is always interesting, even to the stranger who knows not a word of the language. Beside them our actors are but commonplace puppets. What can we call, for example, the series of conventional gestures with which they load their grimaces, but ridiculous apings, from which the Japanese theatre is entirely exempt. Therein consists its vast superiority in point of resemblance; what the Japanese represent is, they insist, life itself. With us, spoken pieces or pantomime are alike remote from it. In actual life we are not always speaking, but we do speak. The conventional gestures, so piteously grotesque, of our pantomimes are there to take the place of speech when it is absent. Japanese mimes have not to perpetrate these absurdities, because they speak when they have to speak. Life is composed of words and actions. With us the theatre is, or nearly so, one or the other. In Japan it is the one and the other. We may thus define Japanese dramatic art as pantomime freed from conventional improbabilities, and where there is speech as there would be in real life. Do the Japanese actors speak naturally? The auditoria not being acoustically constructed, and the spectators also "going in for" actual life, which is far from being silent, the actors are obliged, in order to be heard, to speak out in a way which surprises us at first, and is displeasing, but which we soon get used to.

In a future number we shall go behind the scenes and endeavour to give an account of a Japanese drama.

A. LEQUEUX.

A Rehearsal, by Shunyei.

DESCRIPTION OF PLATES.

Plate BHD represents the auditorium of a theatre after Toyokuni, also the stage and the places nearest it.

The scene shows the interior of a house of which we see, in the background, the enclosure, made of frames of paper. A violent quarrel is exhibited. A young woman tries to separate the combatants, while a fourth actor waits, motionless, for his time to take part in what is going on. The smoking apparatus of the two adversaries lie on the floor, and the two plates of *brasero*, and ash pan, placed on each side, show that the dispute has arisen in the course of a quiet conversation.

The boarded passage for the exits and entrances of the actors across the auditorium above the heads of the public, leads to the left.

On a level with the stage, on the spectators' right, is the orchestra composed of tambourines and guitars (*shamisen*). The person on his knees before the orchestra, marks time by means of two pieces of wood held in his hands. He has also to knock three times. He goes out in front of the stage before the curtain is drawn, and knocks his two pieces of wood together to obtain silence. Another person is seated in front of the orchestra, the prompter, known by the book in his hand. Behind the black screen which partly hides the musicians, is the chorus, the actor who, invisible, comments on the passages which are rendered in pantomime. The four projections seen in front of the pit are for placing candles on. The large inscription on a red ground above the orchestra signifies, "great success."

Commencing at the left of the crowd of spectators, we shall find two stages of boxes where women are following the course of the representation with interest. With their white head-dresses artistically folded, those of the lower stage are women of the people, serious and discreet in their behaviour. Above them, the richness of the head-dresses denotes women of Yoshivara, whose demeanour is not otherwise open to remark. Level with these, we find crowded in two stories people of the lower class in free and easy attitudes. An attendant is on the watch to prevent them from invading the boards. Among them we may observe a mother nursing her baby. In the boxes which encircle the stage, whence only the heads of the occupants emerge, an audience of a very mixed character is congregated. Young women, arriving late, trust themselves on the narrow ledge by which they gain their places. In the front are also boxes for

the commoner sort of people. All do not give continuous attention to the play. Here one is pouring out a glass of saké, near him a half-naked porter—for the lower orders do not dress for the theatre—asks his neighbour for a light. On the sill of the boxes are placed cups which help to pass the long hours of the representation. On the right, an audience more earnest is seated. And then there are boxes with women in the front seats, and, behind them, young fellows, who seem to be there as much for the sake of the fair spectators as for the spectacle.

The absence of spectators of the better class in this Plate is explained by the fact that the boxes for the aristocracy are at the sides, a prolongation of the boxes where we have observed groups of women.

The extreme end of the auditorium, invisible here, is generally occupied by an amphitheatre of places at a low price.

Plate BBC gives a branch of camelia in flower, springing from behind the margin, one knows not whence. A little bird, a sparrow, timidly sits on this branch. That is all, but it is enough to evoke in the contemplative mind the sensation of newly awakened spring. If the composition is succinct and clear, still more succinct and clear is the execution; one stroke puts in the stalk; the form of the leaves is due to nothing more than a black spot or two; the flowers are perfected by means of sinuous lines, and the design of the bird is a *résumé* of these summary methods. Absolute control of the brush is the one postulate for making a sketch worthy of the collection of a worshipper of ancient art such as Shunboku was, as is seen by his numerous works on the old masters. See Plates AHH, Part XVIII., and BBH, Part XX.

Plate BFF brings together six small landscapes from an album engraved by Hiroshigé; little as to size, but of what depth within their narrow limits! In these tiny compositions, printed in two quiet tints, stands revealed all the genius of the great landscape artist, as much, perchance, as in the large and richly coloured pages of which we have already given examples. It is a lake whose banks are indented by numberless peninsulas on which rear themselves severe crytomerias. The landscape artist takes delight in the little bays which penetrate the land under cover of the saplings and aquatic plants. Then he leaves the lake, to sketch a hillside where cherry-trees are in bloom. Four great trees of evergreen foliage erect their marked *silhouettes*, and in the background the white cone of Fuji cuts into the blue. Placed on an elevated promontory, the artist amuses himself with a veil which he might almost touch with his foot. At another time he approaches the prows of the vessels which lie at anchor, and makes them the principal part of his sketch. Again he discovers a point whence through a depression of the ground, are seen the roofs of a village and the white sails on the liquid surface. This arrangement, with the solid trees in the foreground, opening to disclose the

distant horizon, is a veritable "find." And, as the sunlight is disappearing in the evening mist, he has painted a fleet of boats, whose masts stand clear in slender *silhouette* on the sky, and on the bank, belated travellers, some on foot, some in *kago*. He who is leaving, with an empty *kago*, his day done, symbolises for the Japanese the content of work accomplished in the last rays of the evening.

The page represented to the right, in Plate BFI, is a series of cats in various attitudes, by Hiroshigé; cats asleep, cats washing their faces, cats at play, are thrown on the page with equal skill. We have seen that it is the way in Japan to abridge the tails of these domestic animals. Most of them preserve a mere tuft.

On the left-hand page are groups by Massayoshi, taken at random from a page of an album, horses running wild, puppies in familiar attitudes, rabbits, a pheasant, a kingfisher, a cock and hen, goslings—mere playthings of the artist, but lessons in nature and life.

Plate BEH represents a saké bottle in Bizen stoneware, covered with a slight varnish of red. This piece belongs to the end of the last century. It exhibits that unity of composition which we have so often pointed to in Japanese art. In fact, its shape, that of the pumpkin, is completed by accessories which are derived from the same plant. The handle is made of bindweed twined round, while about the body of it run the leaves and the fruit. The saké which this vessel is intended to hold is a fermented liquor, of an alcoholic strength about midway between that of natural wine and that of brandy. It is generally drunk hot. It is a luxurious drink, an adjunct of copious dinners and holiday gatherings. So the vessels for it are always made to evoke ideas of gaiety. Often, indeed, this is done by means of jovial inscriptions. It is on this bottle that Mr. Brinckmann restored the following inscription, graven with a spatula (*see* Part XX, page 294):—"On a snowy evening, as on a summer's evening, happiness is complete for those who possess this article"—a merry allusion to the contents of the bottle, while a tribute to its intrinsic value.

Plate BFC reproduces a hexagonal earthen cup, covered with enamel in various colours, made at Kioto in 1800 by Dohatshi, a celebrated potter. The three devils which are its supporters are curious for the diversity of their attitudes. Whilst two of them yet stooping, are making violent efforts to stand upright, the third, who has succeeded in doing so, bears his share of the burden with an air of content. A series of chrysanthemums, stamped on the clay, goes round the edge of the cup. This one is covered with grey enamel, while the three figures are yellow, green, and brown respectively.

It is curious to see how the conception of the devil is the same in all countries. Horns,

prominent teeth, and cloven hoofs, are just as familiar to the oriental mind as to that of the west. Perhaps, indeed, we might find, on the exterior of a gothic cathedral, this beard which recalls the whiskers of the cat or the tiger, which at first sight seems peculiar to oriental devils.

The decorative arrangements of Plate BGF are formed of leaves of the palm maple (*acer palmatum*), and by the small leaves of the cycadia.

Plate BDD presents an arrangement more delicate and refined, in which long and slender bindweeds escape from sheaves of chrysanthemums, which are bound together with a riband.

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SEPARATE PLATES.

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BGF. **Industrial Model.** Leaves, Ferns.

BHD. **Interior of a Theatre.** Triple Plate. By Toyokuni.

BBC. **Bird and Flower.** By Shunboku.

BFF. **Landscapes.** By Hiroshigé.

BDD. **Industrial Model.** Flowers.

BFI **Two pages of Sketches.** Cats, by Hiroshigé; and various Animals, by Massayoshi.

BFC. **Cup in Pottery, supported by Three Devils.** By Dohatshi.

The next Number will contain an "Essay on Japanese Engraving," by Mr. S. Bing, with reference to the Exhibition of Japanese Engravings, in the "Ecole Nationale des Beaux Arts," in Paris, May 1890.

BEH

BGF

歌川豊國筆

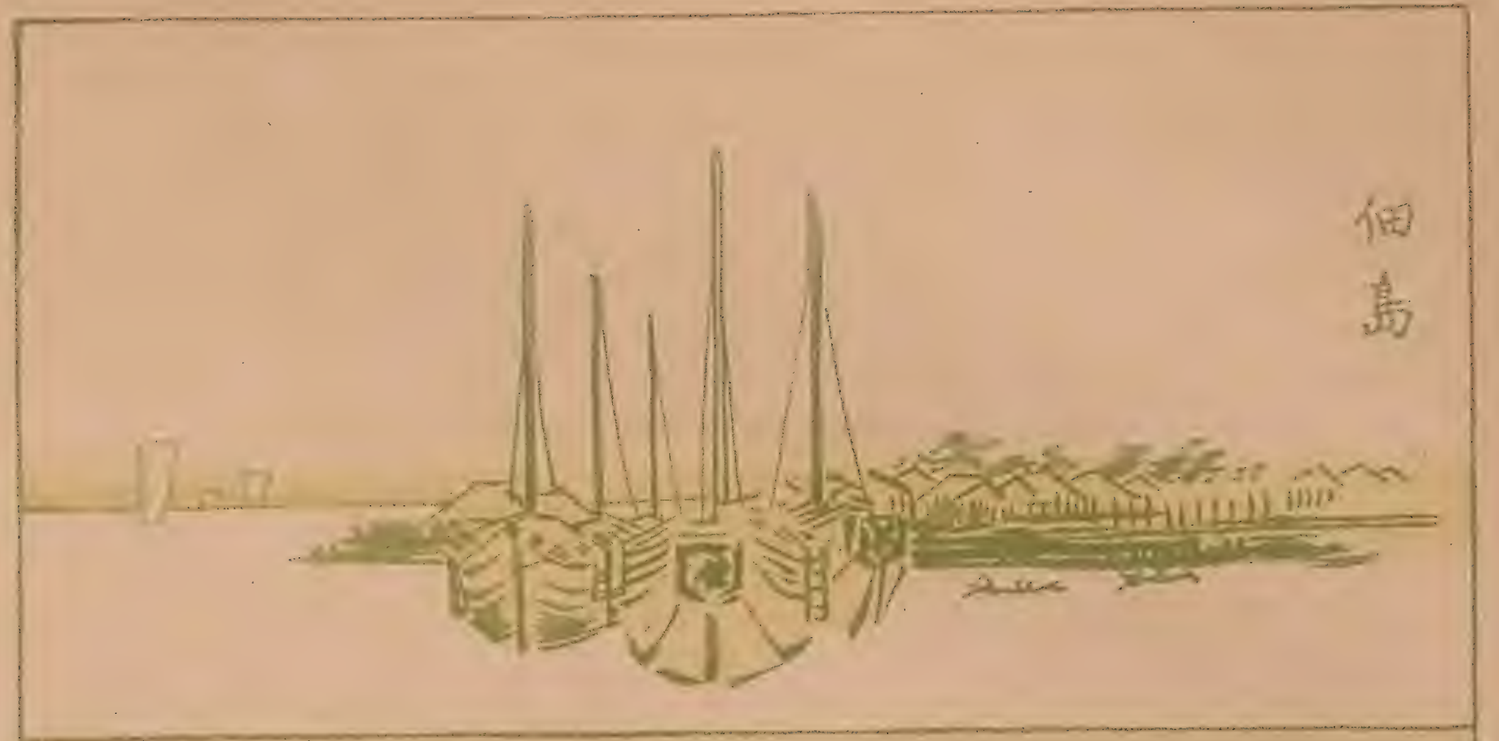
再板

江戸馬喰町二丁目角

西村屋与八

芝居大繁昌之圖
歌川豊國筆
再板
江戸馬喰町二丁目角
西村屋与八

隅田渡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